

THIS QUARTER

Edited & Published by EDWARD W. TITUS

Vol. IV

No. 4

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THIS QUARTER : Published quarterly, 30 Francs, \$1.25 or Five Shillings a copy. 110 Francs a Year in France; \$5.00, One Guinea or 130 Francs in all other countries, post free. Publication, circulation and advertising office at No. 4, Rue Delambre, Montparnasse, Paris, France. Editorial office at No. 8, Rue Delambre, Paris. THIS QUARTER receives manuscripts and art material (line drawings only) on the definite understanding that it assumes no responsibility for loss or damage while in transit or in the Editor's custody. Accepted contributions will be paid for. All material published herein is copyright by the Editor. No manuscript will be returned unless it has been accompanied by International Reply Coupons sufficient to prepay return postage.

INTERVIEWS WITH THE EDITOR MAY BE HAD BETWEEN 2 AND 7 O'CLOCK ON THE FIFTEENTH OF EVERY MONTH OR OTHERWISE BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. IF THE FIFTEENTH FALLS ON A SUNDAY THE TUESDAY FOLLOWING WILL BE THE EDITOR'S RECEIVING DAY.

Printed in France.

THIS QUARTER

June

EDITORIALLY:

GOETHE AND HIS CRITICS The shades of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe are garnering the world's tribute. Tribute of homage and tribute of scorn : homage from the world's thinkers and artists who have attained the serene zenith of their calling; scorn from the inexperienced in the art of life, from the undisciplined, floundering, poiseless artificers, incapable of feeling at home in any other company than of those who, like themselves, are single-grooved, immature, and given to the vogue of the day. All of which is no more than a repetition, on a universal scale, of the living Goethe's experience in Germany.

One feature of the opposition Goethe could not escape while he was alive is now entirely absent, namely censorship and attacks by government authorities as well as individuals, on the ground of revolutionary tendencies, immorality, obscenity and blasphemy in his works. "Filth" and "ordure" were the epithets freely levelled at his writings. *Faust* was grotesquely bowdlerized before it could be presented on the stage, and that almost a quarter-century following its appearance in print. In those halcyon days, theatrical managers worried but little about coming to terms with playwrights when they wished to produce the play of a living author. Poor Goethe was helpless in the matter,

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and when finally *Faust* was about to be produced at Braunschweig in 1829, he wrote resignedly to the producer, Holteis : " Go ahead, do with my *Faust* what you like."

*
**

THE USE OF 'NASTY' WORDS As for foreign countries, great as Carlyle's admiration of the "illustrious foreigner," he also had qualms of conscience on the subject of Goethe's morality. Carlyle published his translation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* anonymously and wrote in the equally anonymous preface as follows : " In many points, both literary and moral, I could have wished devoutly that he had not written as he had done; but to alter anything was not my commission.... Accordingly, except a few phrases and sentences, not in all amounting to a page, which I have dropped as unfit for English taste, I have studied to present the work exactly as it stands in German."

Another anonymous translator, who rendered *Werther's Leiden* into English, also took it upon himself to make omissions, claiming that the passages omitted " might give offence in a work of this nature."

Goethe must have had the many antagonisms in mind when he wrote in *Faust* :

"Wer darf das Kind beim rechten Namen nennen?
Die wenigen, die was davon erkannt,
Die thöricht genug ihr volles Herz nicht wahrten,
Hat man von je gekreuzigt und verbrannt." *

Already in the second edition of his *Faust* he had been driven to revision and toning down :

"Muss all' die garstigen Wörter lindern :
Aus Scheisskerl Schurk; aus Arsch mach Hintern." †

* "Who dares to give the child its rightful name?
The few who to that plight had been awake,
Imprudently their brimming hearts not warded,
Their minds and souls to mobs revealed, rewarded
At all times were by death on cross and stake."

† The Editor asks to be excused from Englishing this couplet.

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It would, however, be going too far to say that Goethe's use of those "nasty" words was a point of conscience, an article of faith with him. It was no more than an occasional out-cropping of a sort of playful scatological tendency, a sporadic caper thrown in to spice up and garnish the concoction, and it is precisely because they were infrequent, far, and—if one may say—violently, apart, and came with a thud before the unwary reader, that the use of these supposedly censurable expressions was in that special sense of shock, and in that special sense alone, obscene.

*
**

LAWRENCE'S LOVE OF LOVE If that conception of obscenity were allowed to stand, as we believe it should, because words, *qua* words, cannot be obscene, reproaches of obscenity would lose much of their virulence. Here an allusion, although rather remote, to the late D. H. Lawrence suggests itself. The more insidious and turpitudinous charge of pornography, which was recently made against Lawrence by a fellow-sufferer in the cause, must be considered nothing short of wanton. We have in mind Mr. Ludwig Lewisohn who, uncharitably and gratuitously, made this inculpation in his late capital treatise on *Expression in America*.* We refer to him as a fellow-sufferer because his most important novel *The Case of Mr. Crump*—our readers may recall—was barred from the mails in the United States.

The reason why we hold the bespattering of the memory of the late D. H. Lawrence, by classifying him with pornographic writers, to be an act of sheer wantonness is, briefly, this :

The worst, if not the best, that can be said of Lawrence on this issue is that he exalted, or, as some would have it, was obsessed by, eroticism : eroticism in its pristine Greek sense, that is—not in its denatured Anglo-American sense. He loved love, of which he had but a scanty share in life, and having had little of it, loved it all the more passionately, loved it with a surrender, with a fanaticism, that no pomatum typography could adequately express.

* p. 158; Harper & Brothers, New York, 1932.

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Lawrence was too consummate an artist to fabricate for himself a synthetic jargon. He was not going to play a game of hide-and-seek with himself on the dim-lighted stair-landings of a spurious art. The artist's great problem—one of his great problems, if you like—is to express himself within the periphery of the potentialities of his art's medium. To hybridize is a confession of failure, evidence of the artist's unfitness for his medium, or of the medium's unfitness for his art. Let him be as crude as he likes, if crude he must be. Let him not hesitate to put on burlap instead of garments of silk, if on his artist's conscience, which is the sole arbiter, it so must be. Fastidiousness of idiom is not the sole token which reveals the artist, but rudeness sometimes will, and when this occurs rudeness ceases to be such. Lawrence did not choose to flee the difficulties of his problem, and so he fell with gusto upon the loamy folk-tongue, as Chaucer and Shakespeare and Goethe and others had done before him, and they were perhaps for their art's sake less sorely beset than he was. Call him a boor for it, if you like, but you cannot call the sources of language pornography.

**

DONNE AS CONTRAST If you want a specimen of simon-pure pornography, read Master John Donne's *Elegy : To his Mistress going to bed*. It is a paean of titillation calculated to awaken—what? Appetite for intercourse—let us decorously call it that—for the sake of intercourse alone. It is deliberately brimful of appetite. It whets and re-whets appetite in a florid, evasive, persuasive, falsely reticent, counterfeit idiom. It is wormy with a cunning, salacious suggestiveness and incitement, and it speaks the furtive tongue of the vendor of lewd picture postcards and of the smirking, sniggering guide in the purlieus of the underworld :

“ *License my roving hands....*” (we dare not go on quoting)
“ *O my America ! my new-found-land,*
My kingdom, safeliest when with one man manned,” &c.

This Elegy is not the only example in Master John Donne, and yet our critics love to designate the old codger as a metaphysical poet.

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SEEING WITH SOUL AND BODY What strikes us as the happiest and most concise definition of pornography was that given by D. H. Lawrence in an essay on *Pornography and Obscenity* which was first printed in Vol II, No. 1, of THIS QUARTER, and subsequently published in a somewhat more elaborate form by Faber & Faber, London. The definition is this : " Pornography is the attempt to insult sex, to do dirt on it."

It would be fatuous to attempt to controvert the charge of pornography against Lawrence by a parade of his life and personal character. Readers of THIS QUARTER are familiar with our view that psycho-analytic theory and practice are a fallacious method by which to appraise the quality of an artist's work. The theoreticians and practitioners of the new science warn against it themselves. Analytical psychology may be useful in discovering the specific motive back of the work—of whatever use that may be—, if there is any specific motive for it, but while motive may account for the bringing into life of a given work of art, it is incapable, known or unknown, of detracting from the work's quality, if it is good, or making it so, if it is valueless. We might well say of Lawrence, as Richard Aldington said of Gérard de Nerval in a preface to the English translation of *Aurelia*, that he was "gentle, charming, whimsical, imaginative, educated, gifted and super-sensitive"; and much more than that we might say to press home the point that a man of that calibre does not write pornographic books. We prefer to rest our case on Lawrence's never-wavering devotional continuity of attitude towards the love, or sex, problem, and his search for an adequate idiom to do it justice, from the outset of his career as a writer, onward. It was not until he had written *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, of which he had composed three complete versions and which, by the way, a critic in *The New York Herald-Tribune* went so far as to characterize as a "religious book," that Lawrence at last broke through the barbed-wire entanglements in which his artist's soul had for so long struggled.

"To see with the soul and body," he cried. The body may, indeed, soil itself with pornography, the soul cannot. In Lawrence, soul and body were inextricably and scrupulously one. "Insult the sex, do dirt on it"—this the soul cannot. There being not the narrowest chink of cleavage

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between the artist's soul and body, the body could not either. That we think is the test; a test that could be rejected in one way only, and this way would have to be denial of the artist's integrity itself. In other words, we would have to say the artist lied.

After this lengthy detour, let us return to the celebration of the Goethe Centenary.

**

OFFICIAL NONSENSE An incident of quite recent occurrence, rather circuitously linking up with the official antagonism to Goethe in his day, is not without amusing interest. Announcement had been made in Berlin of a Goethe celebration under the auspices of a workmen's organization, to take place on March 23 last. The police authorities refused to give a permit for the holding of the function, at which a lecture was to be delivered on *Goethe in the light of Marxism*. The reason assigned by the head of the Public Safety Department was that the holding of the celebration might bring about a breach of the peace, — that mouldy lumber-room makeshift that covers a multitude of official nonsense. The occurrence reminds one of the arrest in the State of New Jersey, during the exciting war days, of a public speaker whose harangue consisted of a more or less flamboyant reading of the *Declaration of Independence*.

Still another incident, but much more noteworthy, was the officially organized Goethe commemoration in Soviet Russia. The length of time required for the journey to Moscow and leaner dollar and sterling resources triumphed over our temptation to undertake a virgin pilgrimage to that fabled country to gorge the editorial self on milk and honey. And so, reduced as we were in wordly circumstance, we had to content ourselves with Rhinewine and beer, instead, and chose a trip to Weimar where German officialdom, in all its governmental, literary and artistic ramification, glorified the memory of the Fatherland's one and only Olympian.

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CAUSE OF ABSTENTION

Let it not be supposed for a moment from what has just been said that because the festivities which were held in all parts of Germany had borne the earmarks of government management, they were lacking in popular participation and the masses of the German people were standing aside from the commemorative gala. If there was any marked abstention, and there would seem to have been, it was on the part of the two camps inimical to one another, the Hitlerites and the Communists. We believe—whatever a visiting foreigner's opinion may be worth—that there would have been a participation of a kind even by these two antagonistic political parties, had the occasion not had a too obviously government superintendence. We observed no corporate participation amongst Weimar's local Hitlerites, but their abstention seemed neither truculent nor ostentatious. Their headquarters were decorated in unison with all other public buildings and private dwellings.

* *

A WHOLE PEOPLE'S CELEBRATION

On the whole it may fairly be said that if the various functions at Weimar were any index, the German people had given themselves body and soul, and with a touching piety of purpose, to honouring the memory of this Wolfgang von Goethe, dead these hundred years, who was not a great general, great statesman, conqueror or saint, but a poet, a teller of tales, a thinker. Let us say without a shackle or shadow of reservation that there have been greater poets, greater tellers of tales, more profound thinkers. Yet why is it that the spectacle of a celebration conducted with such an intellectual passion of a whole people is conceivable and realizable only in Germany? As a spiritual phenomenon it fascinated us, and because it comprised also manifestations which bordered on the grotesque, it fascinated us all the more.

* *

EDITORIALLY

IS THERE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ?

Mr. Aldous Huxley has recently published a highly stimulating essay on *Varieties of Intelligence*. With much acuteness, he attempts a classification of individual intelligence, and when we reached that part of the essay where he draws what seem to be distinctions between intelligences of individuals belonging to different nationalities and races, we thought we had stumbled at last upon a discussion of the question that at times crosses our mind—whether there is such a thing as racial or national intelligence in contradistinction to individual. But Mr. Huxley proved a disappointment, because he does not carry his observations to a point where they could shed light on the subject of our particular, if no more than intermittent, interest.

It would seem that if there were such a thing as national and racial intelligence, the League of Nations should lose no time in appointing a commission for the exclusive study of it. It might, for all that may be known, bring about surprisingly quick results—although we are not so sure that quick results would be welcomed by the multifarious delegations—in the settlement of the problems in which the League is so deeply and altruistically immersed. There would of course have to be the risk run—and hence all possibilities carefully foreseen and thoroughly canvassed and sifted—that a negative report, or finding that no such thing as national or racial intelligence was discoverable, might produce an unexpected unflatteringly repercussive effect on the not unrelated question of the existence even of individual intelligence. The embarrassment in such an unfortunate event would be more than international; it would be all-pervasive.

But if national and racial intelligence does exist, it might prove usefully instructive to know the difference between intelligences, one of which is capable of producing in Germany a spiritual phenomenon such as we spoke of a little while back, and others which are capable of producing spiritual phenomena in another form, or phenomena that are not at all spiritual, in other countries. May one not enlist Mr. Huxley's ingenuity and nimbleness of mind ?

**

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THRONING IT AMONG THE CORSETS

As an instance of where the diffusion among the German people of the commemorative spirit in connexion with the Goethe Centenary touched the grotesque, may be given the fact that we found Goethe portraits and mementos of innumerable variety recalling the Goethe period or his residence at Weimar in practically every shop-window of that city. Judge of our open-mouthed and amused bewilderment when we discovered a huge plaster bust of the Olympian, solemnly pedestalled, in a shop-window, in the midst of a profuse display of corsets and brassières. Preposterous as the sight was, we felt somehow that Goethe himself—inured to gallantry as he was—would not have found the spectacle incongruous could he have seen it, and if only the vestments could also have been appropriately and adequately tenanted, he would have been overjoyed and might have even composed a ribald couplet or two.

In another window, against a picturesque background of eggs arranged in perilous pyramids—the foreground being geometrically zig-zagged by slabs of butter and cheeses of various forms, there loomed a green-patinated bronze head of the venerated Wolfgang. In a corner of the window on a Biedermeier *étagère* and aristocratically apart, there were to be seen a number of volumes in a somewhat faded binding of what seems to have been a collection of early editions of Goethe's works !



THE GOETHE HOUSE

The famous Goethe House at Weimar was of course the shrine towards which the mass of people surged in a constant stream. The description of the house itself is a task fit for a poet. If Shelley, who tried his hand at translating Goethe's *Faust*, were alive to-day, it would be worth the offer of a king's ransom to have him undertake it. We should like to have seen there representative American and English poets, that they might have immersed themselves in the spirituality of the environment, and that they might have been heartened by the spectacle, the like of which there has never been, of a people seeking—and who knows but also finding—the soul's consolation in the adored memory of their poet.

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A spasmodic feeling caught at the throat as one approached and the eyes wandered over the little bedroom in which Goethe died. It is the size of a monastic cell almost, and is, we believe, the smallest room in the huge rambling house. The little green shutters are still there which he asked should be opened to let in more light. The few words he then uttered were of the last he spoke and they have since become legendary. From the threshold of the beyond he found time to write a note ordering a sum of money to be paid to a woman painter who was in want. This was his last mortal act and it preceded by but a short span his last immortal act, which was his death.

The bed is still there, with its faded coverlet, and the little worn rug on the floor; an easy chair; a small bedside table and a washstand with basin and water jug,—that we believe is all. We saw tears in the eyes of men and women as they looked through the door into the tiny room where a Man had died one hundred years ago.

**

A BOOK THAT REALLY SELLS While in Weimar we purchased a copy of Emil Ludwig's book on Goethe (in German). It carries the preface which he had written especially for the *one hundredth edition*. How many editions may have come from the presses since the writing of that preface we do not know. The book is excellently printed; the paper is good; it contains about 800 pages; it is bound in cloth and gold-lettered; there are twenty-odd photogravures; it has an illustrated dust jacket without a "blurb"; it weighs 2lb. 4oz.; and it sells at about 80 cent = 20 Frs. = 4 shillings. In the face of this there is nothing left for us to do but to hie ourselves to the darkest corner we can find and tell our beads.

E. W. T.

Once again we call attention to the English Short Story Award of Fifty Guineas, particulars of which are on the back of the cover of this number.

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

A KEEPSAKE OF POEMS

Rendered by Ludwig Lewisohn, the Reverend James Muir, William McCausland Stewart, Edward W. Titus, W. J. Turner.

By Ludwig Lewisohn :

NATURE AND ART (*Natur und Kunst*)

*Nature and Art, they seem so disunited
Yet find each other ere we are aware;
I, too, no more that old aversion share
And see the balance of attraction righted.*

*We need but strictest love of tasks unslighted!
And having learned in measured hours to bear
With undivided mind Art's stringent care,
Nature once more may glow in hearts delighted.*

*This is the final law of all creation :
Ungirdled minds will meet with sure disaster
Were they to strive to pure perfection on.*

*High aim demands profoundest concentration;
An inner discipline reveals the master
And law's and freedom's majesty are one.*

THE GIRL WRITES TO HER LOVER
(*Die Liebende schreibt*)

*Why I once more above this paper bend
you must not ask with such exacting care!
For I have naught to say but that 'twill fare
until it reaches your dear hands, sweet friend.*

*Because I cannot come this that I send
my undivided heart to you shall bear
with ecstasy, with longing, with despair,
with all that no beginning has nor end.*

*Nor of to-day would I to you confide
the dreams, thoughts, yearnings that are but a token
of my true heart turning to yours to greet it!*

*Thus seeing you I once stood by your side
and spoke no word. What word could I have spoken,
since all my soul was in itself completed ?*

THE THOUGHT ETERNAL
(*Schwebender Genius u. s. w.*)

*Whether day my spirit's yearning
Unto far, blue hills had led,
Or the night lit all the burning
Constellations at my head—
Hours of light or hours nocturnal
Do I praise our mortal fate :
If man think the thought eternal
He is ever fair and great.*

THE ELFS SING
(*Elfensang*)

*At mid of night, when the people are sleeping,
then shines for us the moon,
then stars for us are bright :
We sing and we circle
and dance with delight.*

*At mid of night, when the people are sleeping,
on meadows by the alders
through space we float and stream
and singing and swaying
we dance to us a dream.*

From the Gnomic Poems of Goethe :

THE RIGHT MONUMENT
(*Und wo die Freunde verfaulen.—Zahme Xenien V.*)

*Wherever thy friends may moulder
Let it be one to thee,
If under granite boulder,
If under wind-swept lea.
The living shall remember
However dour his day,
Unto his dead to render
What never can decay.*

GNOMIC VERSES

*Unto God the Orient.
Unto God the Occident.
Northern lands and Southern lands
lie in the peace of His great hands.*

By the Reverend James Muir :

THE WEE WILD ROSE
(*Sah ein Knab' ein Röslein steh'n*)

Willie spied a wee, wild rose,
Wonnin' a' its lane :
Buddit jist as mornin' glows.
Near he comes, an' doon wi' 's nose
Snuffs an' glow'rs fu' fain.
O wee rosie, sweet an' red
Bloomin' a' your leefu' lane!

Says the laddie—"Let me cull ye,
Wee rose a' your lane."
"Na! Na! bre'k my stummie, will ye ?
If ye daur your bluid I'll spill ye;
Dinna gie me pain."
O wee rosie, sweet an' red,
Greetin' a' your leefu' lane!

But the laddie scorn'd the ban
O' rosie a' its lane :
Brak the stem an' jagg'd his han',
Didna heed the bluid that ran—
Rosie was his ain!
O wee rosie, sweet an' red,
Deein' a' your leefu' lane.

By William McCausland Stewart :

ΟΡΦΙΚΑ ΕΠΗ
(*Urworte, Orphisch*)

DAEMON

*As on the day thou to the world wast given,
The sun stood forth to bid the planets greeting,
And thou thenceforward on and on hast thriven
Following the law that moulded thy creating.
So must thou be—Flight from Thyself forbidden—
Thus prophets spake, thus sybils in their speeding;
Nor time nor might have virtue for dissolving
Imprinted form now living and evolving.*

CHANCE

*But with and round a self so sternly bounded
Floats gay an ambient something to renew it;
Alone you dost not live, but springst surrounded,
Dost what thou dost as fellow-humans do it;
In life we now succeed, are now confounded,
For life's a game,—and so we gambol through it.
But soon the ring of years has reached its turning,
The lamp awaits the brand that brings the burning.*

LOVE

*That flame-brand tarries not!—From heaven
swooping,
Whither from Chaos Old he upward flew,
Love downward planes on airy feather drooping,
Flutters round breast and brow the spring-tide
through,—
Seems now to flee, now once more down is stooping:
There springs weal-woe, sweet-bitter, rapture-rue.
To an Abstracted Vague what hearts are fated!
What's noblest to the One is dedicated.*

NECESSITY

*Again it is even as the stars decreed it :
Determination, Law; and All that willing
Is but our will because we so were needed;
Moods, fancies silent bow to such fulfilling;
What's dearest from the heart is torn unheeded,
Wants, wishes freeze to hard Must's bitter chilling.
So after many lustres still free-hearted
But hemmed yet stricter in than when we started.*

HOPE

*But if this bourn, this brazen rampart lower
With harsh repellent portal, moods outweathered,
Let it but stand four-square with rock-fast power!
The bolts shoot back :—a being stirs, untethered,
Airy, from covering cloud through mirk and shower
She raises us—with her, through her befeathered;—
You know her well, world-wide she soars to find us—
One pinion-beat—and aeons are behind us!*

WENN IM UNENDLICHEN. . . .

*As in the Infinite, unending
The Same, itself repeating, flows,
And heaven's myriad-vaults ascending
With strength and splendour interclose,—
From all thing's life-delight is driving,
From least, from greatest star outpoured,
And all the straining, all the striving :
Eternal rest in God the Lord.*

By Edward W. Titus :

EPIPHANY
(Epiphaniasfest)

*The holy three kings with their golden star,
They eat and drink, but what poor pay they are.
They eat the platter clean and drain the jar,
They eat and drink, but what poor pay they are.*

*The holy three kings came in by the door,
They were but three and certainly not four,
But if a fourth had joined the three, both score
And holy kings would total so much more.*

*The first was white, his beauty was most rare,—
If in bright daylight one might see him there!
Alas, despite his haberdashery,
He never could a maiden win, could he.*

*The other was of swarthy skin and tall;
A singer; women followed at his call.
Instead of scent and spice he carried gold,
Hence welcome was in poor and rich household.*

*The last one was a blackamoor and small,
Who liked to take his pleasure, liked to brawl.
He relished drink, he relished food.
He ate and drank, and paid in gratitude.*

*Thus, well disposed, the holy three kings filed
In to salute the mother and her child,
Beside whom honest Joseph sat in awe.
The ox and ass lay hidden in the straw.*

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

*We bring you gold, they said, and myrrh we bring,
For ladies like to see the censer swing.*

*And wines we have of choicest vintages,
In which we three can outdrink six with ease.*

*Since only dames we see and cavaliers,
But find no asses and no prancing steers,
We seem to have invaded the wrong pew,
So hence we go and bid you all adieu.*

LEGEND
(*Legende*)

*To a bewildred holy man
Out in the desert ran
On his goat-feet a faun and spake :
Oh, Master, pray for me, me and my kin,
That we may to heaven go, there to win
Eternal bliss, for which our hearts so ache.
The holy man in turn so to him spake :
Your plea's too risky, rather
In prospect slim for me to father.
Alone your curtsey loud guffaws
Would raise, made with your goatish paws.
Sharp struck back the wild man as from a flail :
What cause have you at my goat's feet to rail ?
Have I not often seen, so trim and smart,
Mere donkey-heads to heaven depart ?*

THE HARP PLAYER
(*Harfenspieler*)

*Who seasoned not with tears his bread,
Who night on night by torment riven
Wept not on his reposeless bed,
He knows you not, you hosts of heaven.*

*You thrust him in life's tangled net,
You burden him with guilt and rueing,
Then cast him off by woes beset :
Thus guilt on Earth wrecks its undoing.*

THE HARP PLAYER
(*Harfenspieler*)

*Prowling want to strange doors leads me,
Silent, humble there I stand,
Till a merciful hand feeds me,
And I plod on through the land.*

*Who from far off spies me hearkens,
Quiet joy through his heart creeps,
Or his eye a tear drop darkens,
And I wonder why he weeps.*

THE HARP PLAYER
(*Harfenspieler*)

*He who to loneliness will give
Himself is soon alone,
Since each will love and each will live,
Best leave to each their moan.*

*So leave me to my grief!
And had I but one brief
Lone moment known,
I'd not have been alone.*

*The lover spies, frets soul away,
For fear his love lie not alone.
So spy on me by night and day
Heartache, on me the lonely one,
And woe, on me the lone forlorn.
Ah, but when once to my grave borne,
Once under sod and stone,
Then I shall be alone.*

NATIVITY
(*Nativität*)

*The German is erudite
When he wields his language right;
And no one would say no
If he would travelling go.
But back on native sod
He is more to science wedded,
And he can thank his God
If he is not more wrong-headed.*

TO THE UNITED STATES
(*Den Vereinigten Staaten*)

*America, fate serves you better
Than this our Continent, age-tarnished,
Your land no castle-ruins litter
By basalt columns garnished.
Your soul there cannot hinder
In the fulness of your life
Past empty day's reminder
Or futile strife.*

*Live through your sovereign day elate,—
And when your sons fledge into songsters
May save them kindly fate
From tales of knights and ghosts and gangsters.*

By W. J. Turner :

TO THE MOON
(*An den Mond*)

*Filling once more wood and vale
Pours thy silent light,
Now at last my soul dissolves
In that stillness bright;*

*Amplitude that hast no end
Gazing without weight,
Like the mild eye of a friend
Softening o'er my fate.*

*Every echo feels my heart
Sad and happy chime,
Into joy and pain to part
Life-long, lonely time.*

*Flow by, dearest river, flow!
I'll no more be gay,
So pass laughter, kisses, so
True love fades away.*

*I indeed did once possess
What so precious is
None forgets, to his distress,
That it once was his!*

*River burbling in bright flood
Vale-through, never still,
Burble, burble till my blood
Thou with singing fill!*

JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

*Whether deep in winter night
Furious thou o'erflow,
Or in flakes of shining light
Bind spring's blossoming snow.*

*Blest, who himself hateless holds,
Though the world employs,
To his breast a friend enfolds
And his love enjoys;*

*What, of all men lives apart
Unknown, far from sight,
Through the labyrinth of the heart
Wanders in the night.*

RAPTURE OF SADNESS

(Wonne der Wehmut)

*Dry, O dry not those sad tears
Tears of everlasting love!
Ah, to even half-dried eyes
How the world seems waste and wide!
Dry not; dry not those sad tears
Tears of luckless love!*

RECONCILIATION
(*Aussöhnung*)

*Passion engenders suffering!—Who shall ease
The unquiet heart with too great loss oppressed ?
Where are the quick-fled hours, the vanished peace ?
'Twas vain indeed to choose what's loveliest!
Dark is the spirit, disordered all our doing;
How the world dies away on sense pursuing!*

*Then there upfloats music's angelic-winging
In myriads interwoven tone and tone,
Right through and through they flood man's inner
O'er-flowing beauty never to be gone! being,
The moistening eye perceives in higher longing
Tears blend with tones to godlike work belonging.*

*And so the heart assuaged swiftly aware,
Perceives that it still beats and wants to beat,
In purest thankfulness of grace will dare
Repay itself for beauty so complete.
Now does it feel—O may it ne'er remove!—
The double-bliss of music and of love.*

Three Versions of the Same Poem by Different Hands :

By Ludwig Lewisohn :

ULTIMATE ASPIRATION
(*Selige Sehnsucht*)

*Let the sages only hear it
and the vulgar jeer in vain!
I extoll the living spirit
that for fiery death is fain.*

*Thee begotten and begetter
in the night of mortal passion
comes by candle-light to fetter
feeling of an alien fashion.*

*Now the night no more a prison
breaks from shadow to elation,
wherein new desire arisen
strives toward loftier procreation.*

*Distances to thee are shrunken
and thy agile flight is doomed,
and at last, with radiance drunken,
art thou, butterfly, consumed.*

*And till thine this deep behest :
Die to win thy being!
Art thou but a sullen guest
upon earth unseeing ?*

By Edward W. Titus:

SUPREME ASPIRATION
(*Selige Sehnsucht*)

*Tell it only to the sages
For the swarm but cheap jests cherish :
I sing life throughout these pages
That by fiery death would perish.*

*In night's stillness wanes love's glamour
—Oh, begotten and begetters!—
And strange feelings rise in clamour
While the pallid candle gutters.*

*And you are bound down no longer
To night-ministered carousal,
Cravings than all others stronger
Urge to loftier espousal.*

*Distances you never reckon,
Fly in wake of miraged aim;
Eager for the flames that beckon,
Butterfly, you die by flame.*

*Death shall be your being's test :
Learn this in all starkness,
Else you dwell a sorry guest
In a world of darkness.*

By William McCausland Stewart :

SACRED SEEKING
(*Selige Sehnsucht*)

*To the Wise alone proclaim it,
Disregard the Many's spurning :
I will praise the Live and name it,
That for Fiery Death is yearning.*

*In the cool love-nights which saw thee
Pro-created, pro-creating,
Strangest feelings overawe thee
Through thy dimly lighted mating.*

*Rapt from shadows that enwrought thee,
Torn from out dark night's clustration,
Up a New Desire has caught thee
To yet loftier Generation.*

*There's no limit to thy yearning,
Winging spell-bound to thy aim,
Till at last—O blessed burning—
Butterfly, thou meet the flame.*

*For unheld by this behest :
Die, to speed becoming !
Thou art but a sorry guest
On the dark earth roaming.*

STEFAN GEORGE

GOETHE DAY (from *Der siebente Ring*)

With delicate dawn we set out on our way
At summer's end through steaming stretch of field
Towards His town. As yet the clumsy walls,
The unworthy scaffoldings stood free of men
And day—unearthly pure, almost majestic.
We came before his silent house,—we lifted
In homage up our eyes, and went.—This noon-day
When all shall raise their shout our 'hail' is still.

*A few hours more : the consecrated space
Betrampled : those who to believe must handle. . . .
The tawdry colours flick about the alleys—
The festive many bustle about, being glad
To deck themselves decking the Great and ask
How 'tis he serves for every guild's escutcheon—
Listening only to the loudest voice
Nor know the heights that heights are of the soul.*

What know ye of the song's and vision's splendour
Which ye begape! even in the child rich anguish
That creeps along the dike, stoops to the spring—
In the boy torment, torment in the man
And sadness which he hid beneath a smile.
If as in living one yet beautifuller
He now should come, who'd honour him? he'd pass
A king unrecognized upon the road. you

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*You call him yours, roar loud your thanks, exult—
Fulfilled indeed, but in the lowest layers
Only, with all his impulses, like beast—
To-day the barking mob alone is vocal. . . .
Yet sense ye not that he who now is ashes
This span of years still much for you holds locked
And that in him the radiant one already
Much has grown pale ye still eternal call.*

(Rendered from the German by William McCausland
Stewart)

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THE RETURN OF TCHORB

The Kellers were late in coming out of the theatre. In the quiet German town, with its somewhat opaque air, where the ripples athwart the river have been faintly blurring the reflection of the cathedral for more than seven centuries, performances of Wagner are given with relish, in comfortable ease; one is glutted with music.

After the theatre Keller took his wife to a smart tavern famous for its white wine, and it was not until past one o'clock that the motor-car, frivolously lit within, whisked them through the dead streets to the iron gateway of their sedate little house. Keller, a sturdy old German very like President Kruger, stepped out first on the pavement, where the shadowy network of the leaves stirred in the grey light of the street-lamp. The light picked out for an instant Keller's starched chest, and then the drops of the glass beads on his wife's dress as she disengaged one plump leg and in turn alighted from the car.

It was in the hall that they were met by the maid. In frightened whispers, all in a breath, she told them of the visit of Tchorb. The plump and still fresh face of Varvara Klimovna Keller began trembling; she flushed with emotion.

“He told you that she was ill?”

The maid whispered still faster. Keller stroked his close-cropped hair with a fat palm, and his big,

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somewhat ape-like face, with its long upper lip and deep wrinkles, frowned like an old man's.

"Oh, I can't wait till to-morrow! We'll go there at once," muttered Varvara Klimovna, shaking her head and turning ponderously round where she stood, in an attempt to catch the loose end of the veil covering her fair wig. "Good gracious! That's why there haven't been any letters for quite a month!"

Keller prodded his opera-hat open with his fist, saying in his careful, somewhat guttural Russian :

"That fellow's gone crazy. If she is ill, how dare he take her to that vile hotel again?"

But they were wrong, of course, in thinking that their daughter was ill. Tchorb had told the maid that because it was the easiest thing to say. He had returned from abroad alone; and it was only now that he realized he would have to explain all the same how his wife had died and why he had not written.

The explaining would be difficult. How could they understand that he had wanted to possess his grief alone, and not smirch it with anything alien, not share it with anybody? He fancied to himself that the manner of her death was extremely unusual, almost unheard of; and also that no death could have been purer—a death from the shock of that electric current which, jetting into glass, gives such a pure, bright light.

And since that spring day, when, on the white road seven miles from Nice, she had laughingly touched the live wire hanging from a pole blown down by a storm, Tchorb's whole world had been instantly hushed and in retreat. At once even her body, which he himself carried in his arms to the nearest village, seemed to have become strange and unwanted. In Nice, where she was to be buried,

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the unpleasant consumptive clergyman vainly tried to get details out of him. He merely smiled dully. Day after day he would sit on the shingle, pouring coloured pebbles from one palm into the other. Then suddenly, without waiting for the funeral, he started back to Germany through all the places they had visited together in the opposite direction on their honeymoon journey. In Switzerland, where they had spent the winter, but where now the apple blossom was passing, he recognized nothing except inns. In the Black Forest, however, through which they had passed in the autumn, the chilly spring did not interfere with his reminiscences. And just as amidst the Riviera shingle he had tried to find that unique pebble which she had shown him on the eve of their last walk, a pebble round and black, with a regular white belt—so now he was looking as he went for every one of those things she had distinguished with an exclamation: the peculiar outline of a rock, a cottage covered with silver-grey scales, a black fir-tree, a tiny bridge over a white stream, and that which had been perhaps the prefiguration of her fate—some gossamer swinging ray-like from the telegraph wires and studded with beads of mist. She was with him again, stepping swiftly along in her neat little boots; and all the time there was the play of her hands, now picking a leaf from a bush, now casually stroking a rocky wall,—light, laughing hands they were, that knew no repose. There was also her small face, heavily and darkly freckled; her wide, pale greenish eyes, eyes the colour of glass sherds smoothed by the waves.

In some vague fashion he fancied that if only he could collect all the trifles they had noticed together, could recreate the still so immediate past, his awareness of her would defy death and forever would be with him. So he filled the days. But at night—at

night her imaginary presence had been unbearable. During the three weeks of his solitary return journey he had hardly slept. Now, when at last he had reached the quiet town where he had met her and where they had been married, now that he had arrived at the station whence together they had set forth in the autumn, he was dazed with fatigue.

It was evening, about eight o'clock. From behind the houses the tower of the cathedral rose sharp and black against the purple glow of the sunset. In the station square the same decrepit cabmen were on the rank. The same newsboy was giving an occasional shout in his dull crepuscular voice. The same black poodle with listless eyes was raising its thin paw beside the advertisement kiosque, its blackness against the red letters of a poster spelling "Parsifal."

Tchorb's luggage consisted of a suit-case and a big yellow trunk. He took a cab through the town. The cabman lazily flapped the reins, holding up the trunk with one hand. Tchorb remembered that she whom he never called by name had liked driving in cabs.

In the narrow street, round the corner from the Opera House, was an old three-storied inn. It was a house of ill fame; its rooms were let by the week or by the hour. A black house, its walls were peeling in leprous map-like strips; torn muslin hung behind the grimy windows; its inconspicuous street-door was never locked. A pale, insolent waiter led Tchorb along the winding corridor. It smelt of damp and cabbages. And when Tchorb had followed this waiter into the room the latter had chosen, the pink bathing girl pictured in a gilt frame over the bed made him instantly recognize it as the same room that he and his wife had had their first night together in.

Everything had amused her then—the fat man in

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his shirt-sleeves who had been sick in the corridor, their choice of such a squalid hotel, and the presence in the washing basin of a marvellously blonde hair. But most of all she had been amused by the way in which they had vanished from her home. As soon as they had arrived there from the church, she had gone to her room to change. Downstairs the guests had been gathering for supper. Keller, in a tail-coat of broadcloth, a mellow smile on his apish face, patted on the shoulder now one, now another, and served them with *schnapps*. Meanwhile Varvara Klimovna took her more intimate friends in couples up to inspect the bedroom allotted to the young couple. Feelingly, she pointed out with a whisper the giant eiderdown, the orange-blossoms, the two pairs of brand-new slippers—a pair of big check ones and a pair of little red ones with tiny rosettes—set side by side on a little carpet which bore in gothic characters: “Together, till death us do part.”

Then they had all moved to the tables. It was then that Tchorb and his bride, after a flash of agreement, had slipped through the back door. Only the next morning, half an hour before the train left, they had returned home to fetch their things. Their disappearance had made Varvara Klimovna weep all through the night; her husband, in whose eyes Tchorb, a penniless *émigré* and a writer, was always suspect, had cursed his daughter’s choice, the cost of the wine, and the police (who after all had been able to do nothing). And afterwards, when the young couple had gone on the honeymoon, the old man went and looked at the inn in the lane behind the Opera House; for him, that black, bleary-eyed house became a ghastly and tantalizing image, akin to the memory of a crime.

**

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As the waiter brought in the trunk, Tchorb gazed motionless at the pink oleograph. When the door had been closed, he bent over the trunk and unlocked it. In a corner of the room, underneath a loose strip of wall-paper, a mouse shuffled and scuttled. With a shudder, Tchorb turned on his heel. The bare electric lamp hanging from the ceiling swung gently on its cord. The shadow of the cord slid across the green sofa, breaking at the bend. That other night he had slept on that very sofa. His wife had breathed as regularly as a child. That night he had only kissed her throat—no more.

The mouse stirred again. There are little sounds more terrible than a bombardment. Tchorb left the trunk and paced the room once or twice. The lamp rang as a moth fluttered against it. Tchorb flung open the door, and went out.

Coming downstairs, he felt how utterly tired he was. Outside, the dim blueness of the May night made him feel dizzy. Turning to the boulevard, he walked faster. The square. The stone rider. Dark clouds rising over the public garden. Now, chestnuts were in blossom; then, it had been autumn. They had taken a long walk together on the eve of the wedding. How sweet the dead leaves covering the pavement had smelt—earthy, moist, with a hint of violets in them. The sky on those overcast, delightful days had been dull white, and in the middle of the road the branches were mirrored in a puddle that reminded one of a badly washed photograph. Among the grey villas the still trees were soft yellow, and outside her house a poplar was turning colour, its leaves like translucent grapes. Behind the railings the trunks of birch-trees gleamed, some of them thickly covered with ivy, and she had said that the reddish tinge of their small leaves reminded one of

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the faint rust spots on laundered linen. Oaks and chestnuts bordered the pavement; their black bark was spotted with velvety green; now and then a leaf blew down and flew slant-wise across the street like a scrap of brown paper. She had tried to catch one on the wing with a spade that she had found near a pile of pink bricks where the road was up. A little farther on, from the chimney of a roadman's van, a dove-coloured puff of smoke curled, slanting and melting away among the branches. A resting workman with his arms akimbo had looked at the girl, light as a yellow leaf, dancing with a spade in her uplifted hand. She had pranced about and laughed. Tchorb had walked behind, slightly stooping and thinking that happiness itself had this same smell, the smell of faded leaves.

Now he hardly recognized this street, heavy with the nocturnal splendour of chestnuts. In front of him a street-lamp burned, a branch leaned over its glass, and a few leaves, filled with light at their tips, were transparent. Tchorb approached the house. The shadow of the gate fell upon him in a broken sieve from the pavement, entangling his feet. Behind the railing, beyond the nebulous strip of gravel, he saw the dark front of the familiar house.

One window was open and lighted. Inside this amber gap, the maid was spreading with a sweep of her arm a gleaming sheet on a bed. Abruptly and loudly, Tchorb called to her. With one hand he held the gate, and the dewy feel of the iron on his palm became the sharpest memory of all.

Already the maid was running out to him. As she afterwards told Varvara Klimovna, the first thing that had struck her was that, though she had opened the gate at once, Tchorb had stood silent on the pavement. "He had no hat," she said, "and the light

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of the lamp fell on his forehead, and his forehead was running with sweat, and his hair was sticking to it. I told him that Madame was at the theatre, and I asked him why he was alone. His eyes glittered in a way that frightened one and he hadn't shaved for a long time. He said in a very low voice: 'Tell them she is ill.' I asked: 'Where are you staying?' He said: 'Always the same place.' I said, wouldn't he wait, but he didn't answer, and turned and walked away."

Such was Tchorb's return to the fountain-head of his memories. His bitter-sweet ordeal was nearly at an end. All he still had to do was to spend one night in that room of their wedding night; and then tomorrow the embalming of all the moments of their blighted honeymoon would be complete.

It was as he walked back to the inn along the boulevard—where, on every bench, shadowy figures sat in the blue darkness—that suddenly he realized how, despite his extreme fatigue, he would not be able to sleep if alone in that room with the bare globe and the whispering corners. He reached the square and turned wearily along the main street. He knew now what had to be done. But his search was long; the streets were quiet and deserted, and Tchorb was unaware of the secret lane in which love could be bought. An hour of blind wandering elapsed, leaving him with pricking soles and buzzing ears, and then he stumbled upon the lane. He approached the first woman who hailed him.

"The night . . .," muttered Tchorb, his teeth clenched.

The woman inclined her head, swung her bag, and replied, "Twenty-five. . . ."

He nodded.

Only a little later Tchorb, throwing a casual glance

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at her, noticed heedlessly that she was rather pretty, though very jaded, and had fair bobbed hair.

She knew the squalid inn. More than once she had been there with men. The pale sharp-nosed waiter, on coming downstairs, gave her a friendly wink. As they went along the corridor, a bed creaked heavily and rhythmically behind one of the doors. A little farther and from another room there came the same sound. It made the woman look at Tchorb with a playful but chilly smile.

He ushered her into his room without a word, and at once, overwhelmingly anticipating sleep, he slipped off his collar. The woman crossed to him and said with a smile, "Now, what about a little present?"

Sleepily and absent-mindedly, Tchorb looked at her.

Taking the money, she put it carefully into her bag, and setting that down, crossed to him again, with a little sigh and tossing her short fair hair.

"Shall I undress?" she said.

"Yes, go to bed," mumbled Tchorb. "I'll give you some more in the morning."

She hurriedly unbuttoned her blouse, all the time looking sideways at Tchorb and wondering at his gloomy abstraction. Undressing quickly too and carelessly, he lay on the bed and turned to the wall.

"Something rum about this one," the woman said to herself. She slowly folded her chemise and put it on a chair. Already Tchorb was asleep.

She wandered about the room, and, noticing that the lid of the trunk by the window was not shut, she squatted on her heels and peeped under it. Blinking, and stretching out a bare arm cautiously, she felt a woman's dress, a stocking, some pieces of silk—all folded haphazard and smelling so pleasantly that they made her wistful.

She stood up with a yawn and scratched her thigh; then, naked but for her stockings, she went to the window and drew aside the blind. The window was open, and in the velvety abyss of the street one could see the corner of the Opera House, the dark shoulder of Orpheus looming in the blueness of the night, and a row of lights along the shadowy façade that disappeared slantwise in the dark. Away over there, on the curving strata of the illuminated flight of steps, small dark silhouettes were streaming in a swarm from the bright aperture of the entrance, and motor-cars were gliding towards the steps with sweeping headlights and smooth shiny roofs. She watched them. Only when everybody had gone and the lights went out, she dropped the blind. Then, switching off the light, she stretched beside Tchorb. As she fell asleep, she told herself that twice before she had been in this same room; she remembered the pink picture on the wall.

An hour later she was awakened by a shriek. It was Tchorb.

He had woken up, turned over, and seen, as he imagined, his wife beside him. The shriek was dreadful, as if coming from his very bowels. A white female shape sprang from the bed. When, all trembling, she switched on the light, Tchorb was sitting among the crumpled sheets, his back to the wall, one eye glaring madly through his outspread fingers. Presently he slowly uncovered his face, slowly recognized the woman. She was whispering, terror-struck, and was putting on her chemise.

And instantly Tchorb sighed with relief, realizing that his ordeal was over. He went to the sofa, and pressing his hairy leg with both hands gazed at the woman with an indifferent smile. That smile frightened her still more, and turning away she quickly did

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up the last hook, laced her shoes, and began putting on her hat.

Just then a sound of voices and footsteps came from the corridor outside. "But there is a lady with him," the voice of the waiter was repeating. An angry guttural voice insisted: "But I tell you it's my daughter."

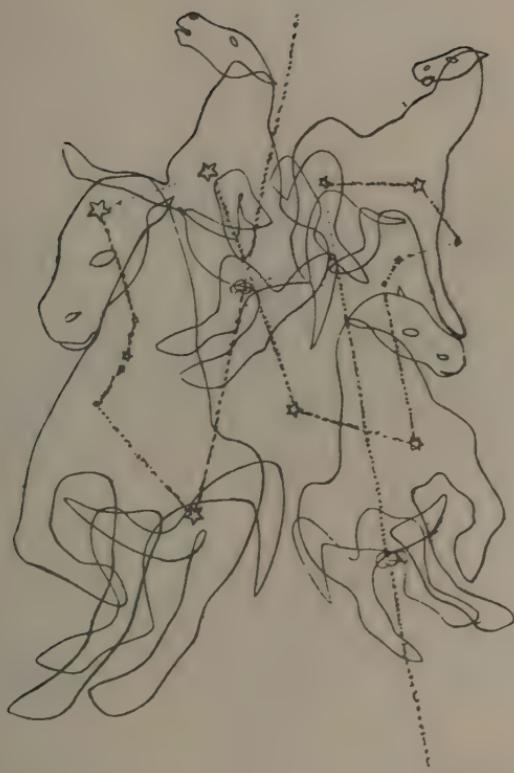
The footsteps stopped outside the door. There was a tap.

The woman snatched her bag from the table and boldly opened the door. She confronted a bewildered old gentleman in an opera-hat, with a pearl stud in his dress-shirt. Over his shoulder peered a stout lady, her face red with weeping, a veil on her hair, and behind them, on tiptoe, stood the short pale waiter. His eyes staring, the waiter beckoned with his hand. The woman grasped his meaning and darted past the old gentleman into the corridor. Still with the same puzzled air, the old gentleman glanced at her, and came through the doorway with the lady. The door closed on them.

The woman and the waiter were left in the passage, looking at each other. Then they bent down and listened. Inside all was silent. It seemed incredible that there were three people there, behind the door. The complete silence continued.

"They're not saying a word," whispered the waiter, and he put his finger to his lips.

(Translated from the Russian by Gleb Struve)



Engraving by *S. W. Hayter*

PAUL VALÉRY

(of the French Academy)

ON POLITICAL PARTIES

There is no party that has not inveighed against its country.

**

All parties have their particular shadows—their mental reservations—their caverns of skeletons and unmentionable dreams—their treasure-holds of ill-considered business and follies.

Aims they have forgotten. Things they aim to forget.

**

In order to subsist they recant the promises which they had made in order to exist.

They are much of a muchness when in power; they are much of a muchness when out of power.

**

You should never hesitate to do a thing that may estrange from you half your partisans so long as it triples the fervour of the other half.

**

One man may feel at home in his political party because of the vagueness of its ideals. Another in his because it professes aims that affect him intimately.

**

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It being as common to meet anarchists in parties that stand for good order as it is to find organizing minds among anarchists, I suggest a regrouping. Let each be placed in the party for which his gifts qualify him.

There are creators, conservatives and wreckers who are such by temperament. Let each be enrolled in the party of his propensity, which is not the party of his vocabulary, nor of his pious wishes, but that of his inherent nature and of his particular mode of action and reaction.

* *

All politics is founded on the indifference of the majority of those whose interests are at stake. Without that indifference politics would be impossible.

* *

Politics began as an art of preventing people from minding their own business.

This was subsequently supplemented by the art of compelling people to settle matters which they did not understand.

This latter principle goes hand in hand with the former.

The upshot of the combination is this : There are "state secrets" in countries of universal suffrage : a bed-fellowship necessary enough and, in the main, endurable, but one that at times gives rise to upheavals and obliges governments to resort incessantly to makeshifts. The ruling power is always compelled to act against its principles. It navigates "close to the wind" against its principles and in the direction of absolutism.

* *

All social states rest on fictions.

Some of them tacitly consent to the inequality of

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the citizenry. Others set up inequality as an institution.

These are practices which are necessary to start the game. The one or the other decided on, the tourney begins and of necessity reveals itself as a contrary action on the part of the individuals.

In a society of equals the individual acts against the inequality. In a society of unequals the greater number works against the inequality.

* * *

Political conflicts distort and disturb the people's sense of distinction between matters of importance and matters of urgency.

What is vital is disguised by what is merely a matter of well-being; the ulterior is disguised by the imminent; the badly needed by what is readily felt; what is fundamental and sluggish by what excites.

All that touches practical politics is necessarily superficial.

* * *

The historian does for the past what the fortuneteller does for the future. But the sorceress lays herself open to verification. Not so the historian.

* * *

One cannot "go into politics" without holding views on questions which no sensible person can claim to understand. He would be infinitely foolish or infinitely ignorant who would dare to have an opinion on the greater part of the problems arising in politics.

* * *

The difference of opinion on the subject of war is easily reducible to the uncertainty felt in a given era—ours—regarding this question: What are the groupings that should war on one another?

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Races, classes, nations, or other social systems still to be discovered?

For class, nation, race are discoveries just as much as the nebulae.

As it was discovered that the earth is part of a certain system, and this, part of the Milky Way, so had it to be discovered that such a person was this by birth and that by his means of subsistence; and it rests with such a person to choose or to puzzle over whether he will fall in with his nation, his class, his sect—or will behave according to his natural tendencies.

*
**

The aim of violence, war, is to settle quickly and by a sudden dissipation of forces difficulties which actually demand the finest analysis and the most delicate experiments, because real stability can be attained only without pressure.

*
**

When the adversary overrates our forces, our purposes and our profoundness; when in order to turn feeling against us he paints us in frightful colours—he is working for us.

*
**

The existence of neighbours is all that protects nations against perpetual civil war.

*
**

The wolf depends on the lamb, which depends on the grass.

The grass is relatively defended by the wolf. The carnivora protect the grass (which nourishes them indirectly).

Between old wolves the battle is fiercer, more expert, but there is a certain forbearance.

*
**

PAUL VALERY

Whatever is essential in any matter is always performed by very obscure, nondescript persons of no particular individual value. But for such persons' existence, but for their being as they are, nothing would ever get done. If nothing were done, they would be the least worse off. They are indispensable yet unimportant.

*
**

Perhaps great events are such to small minds only. To more observant minds it is the inconspicuous and continuous events that matter.

*
**

Events are born of unknown fathers. Necessity is merely their mother.

*
**

Right is a stopgap in the career of might.

*
**

The most pessimistic view of man, things, life and its worth, is perfectly compatible with action and the optimism which action requires. This conception is European.

(Rendered from the French by E.W.T.)

LOUIS MacNEICE

SLEEP

*With poppy wristlet girdle and torque
She who had all day long imagined she slept sound
Fondled by winds and clouds,
Now that tall shadows walk
After the day's hearse in the road between the poplars
And dull titanic thuds
In time's graveyard remind her—(remind her of
what?)*

*Not of the days that were that had been buried deep
But of those unburied because they had not been,
Lean impossible corpses without favour or form)—
She who had all that day fancied that she had sleep,
Felt terribly now awake, nerves whittled by the
obscene*

*Keen knives of whispers, the knowing that it was all
Going, flowing in a flux, nothing fixt, firm,
No term, limit, end, to the vomit of time—Hold,
Hold, damned bells that ring the sunset down,
Windlass of hell, clappers that kill the living
God-of-the-Moment, only god ever.*

*I, naked on a cloud, pretended it was a loving
Daemon, mate of my soul, but now that the cloud
In feeble shreds has sunk in the red river,
I remember the illusion of Persons.
There is no person,
I live in an empty box full of frauds.
Well.*

LOUIS MacNIECE

To whom waiting.

Came with quiet breath, as strained through silk,
But with a body that was desire made body,
Without dreams, with a force not known to many,
Sleep the brother of Death.

BELFAST

*The hard cold fire of the northerner
Frozen into his blood from the fire in his basalt
Glares from behind the mica of his eyes
And the salt carrion water brings him wealth.*

*Down there at the end of the melancholy lough
Against the lurid sky over the stained water
Where hammers clang murderously on the girders
Like crucifixes the gantries stand.*

*And in the marble stores rubber gloves like polyps
Cluster, celluloid, painted ware, glaring
Metal patents, parchment lampshades, harsh
Attempts at buyable beauty.*

*In the porch of the chapel before the garish Virgin
A shawled factory-woman as if shipwrecked there
Lies a bunch of limbs glimpsed in the cave of gloom
By us who walk in the street so buoyantly and glib.*

*Over which country of cowled and haunted faces
The sun goes down with a banging of Orange drums
While the male kind murders each its woman
To whose prayer for oblivion answers no Madonna.*

VITREAMQUE CIRCEN

*Be brave, my ego, look into your glass
And realize that that never-to-be-touched
Vision is your mistress.*

ROWLAND KENNEY

FLANNEL FEET

In the opinion of the rest of the gang, it was a waste of good breath to let Flannel Feet live. He had never been popular. There was something about him which turned every man against him, though what it was I could never make out. He did his daily stint without shirking or shouting. If any old hand turned up and there was no chance of a take on, Flannel dubbed up his coppers with the rest of us to give the man a shove along to the next job. He never hesitated to share his tommy with any man. He downed what beer he could get, drivelled when drunk, and sweated it out in hard graft the following day. The only thing unusual about him was that he never fought for fun. Nor was he quarrelsome. Occasionally he would wade into a rough-house, where every one was welcome to hit anything he could reach and where there was no leavings of hard words or malice after the scrap, but that was all the fighting he cared for.

Why Flannel Feet? I do not know. We all had monikers which were not our own, but in some cases they were names adopted because our own were—unhandy, say, for some reason or another. But Flannel Feet...! He had quite good feet; took eights boots; and, unlike nearly all the navvies I ever knew, he could run well.

With the curiosity of youth I palled up with Flan-

nel Feet for a time, but I found nothing obviously remarkable about him. He was a plain, well-featured, hefty, illiterate, foul-mouthed buck-navvy, who knew the roads, lived hard, and was as sure of a drunkard's death or the workhouse as the rest of us.

Our camp at Drew on the Lampshire Hills consisted of seventeen huts, kept by gangers and other responsible men. The huts were generally in three compartments. In the middle was the kitchen and eating-room. To the left of that, the owner and his family lived and slept. To the right, was the common sleeping-room for six or eight lodgers. In the middle of the camp was a larger hut, the Canteen, where we congregated for about three days a week—or three nights, for we worked alternate shifts. The other four days or nights we clustered about hoping—generally against hope—that somehow we could extend our lines of chalk-marks on Piggy Sam's slate, or otherwise raise a drink without passing coin. Round the camp was deep wood, which we mostly ignored except for a bit of quiet poaching.

Flannel Feet and I lodged with the Standing Ganger, "Big Walt" Mowbray, and his wife, old Margey. Flannel's one friend in the camp was Margey. She used to get him to store odd half-crowns or even larger sums with her so that she could put a bit by for him. Somehow he found it difficult to refuse her. But after a few weeks he would demand the pot and go on a spree. He would start in the Canteen, but when he got nicely warmed up it seemed as if his eyes cleared and he saw, what he could never see when sober, that no one really wanted to drink with or talk to him. He could even see through my pretences, and soon he would wallow off, out of the camp and down to the village pub. There he would play darts with farm labourers, waggoners, handworkers, and odd men-servants from

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the big houses round about. With them he drank more soberly, so to say, than he did with us. He seemed to think of what he was doing, and his money lasted longer.

We were on the highest part of the range of hills under which we were tunnelling, and therefore working deep down—about eight hundred feet—cutting through a drift of hard rock. We drilled holes into the rock face, inserted “pills” of explosive—cylindrical things like a large cartridge—with a length of fuse in them, lit the fuses and cleared up the muck after the blast. In those days, there were only hand drills, and drilling was a sweaty, back-aching job.

One day in June Flannel Feet and I went for a rather longer walk than usual in the woods. We had slept until mid-afternoon—we were on the night shift—and, as it was a nice warm day and we had no money, we drifted into the shade of the trees and rambled along, unthinking. After a time we came to a clearing in the wood, where a small group of trees and bushes made a natural shelter, and we sat down under them for a while. We scarcely spoke. We simply breathed in the fragrance from grass and trees and watched the birds flash by. When we left, Flannel stopped at the edge of the clearing and looked back at the shelter we had just left. There seemed no conscious purpose in his gaze. It was just an instinctive turn with no apparent reason in it.

The following week-end Flannel Feet drew his pot from old Margey. It was bigger than usual and he did not stay long in the Canteen. Pincher Squire, one of our gang, got across him and seemed as if he would soon be fighting drunk, so Flannel slipped away.

“ ‘Swelp me,’ said Pincher as he sat down by me, “ why in hell won’t he stand up to it ? ”

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"Because he's more sense than you," I replied, "so drink up and shut your gob."

Flannel Feet did not turn up that night, nor the following night, nor the one after that. We took no notice for a time, but then Pincher seemed to get worried. He somehow took upon himself the responsibility for Flannel's disappearance.

Big Walt would have none of it. "God's bones," he growled, "don't every bloke pike off in the end? Let the barstard go. 'E warn't no good."

"Now Walt," cautioned old Margey, "he's somebody's lad like the rest of yer."

"I'll find him," was all Pincher said (But there he was wrong, for it was I who found Flannel).

Pincher and I went down to the village pub, but we only learned that Flannel had not been there since the previous Saturday night. We sought out the village policeman, and drew blank—Flannel was not in quod. On our way back we saw a farm hand, who told us that he'd seen Flannel making for the camp about midnight the previous Saturday night, staggering drunk with a woman in tow.

"That's the bleedin' limit," growled Pincher. "A woman! And here we've wasted a day on the swine!"

The following day—I was again on the night shift—I suddenly remembered the clearing in the wood and Flannel Feet's final glance as we left it. Without saying a word to any one, I slipped off among the trees and carefully made my way towards the clearing. I approached it warily. It did not come in the least as a surprise when I saw that the shelter in the centre had been patched up with branches and sacking and turned into a rough hut. It was obviously occupied—I could hear voices, and they were none too friendly.

"There was another quid, you bitch." That was Flannel's voice.

“Ye’re a damned liar, I ain’t never touched a penny of yours.” The woman who had answered crawled out and stared hatefully into the opening. “To hell with yer,” she said. “I’m off, and I hopes your rotten bones’ll lie and stink in that kennel.”

“Aw, don’t go, Lizz.” I was surprised at the sight of Flannel. He crept out like a shaggy and very disreputable-looking dog. He was dirty, drunk and, in some curious way, cowed.

Lizz was a middle-aged, bedraggled roadster with a leathery face and greying hair, all in rough tails about her cheeks. She was ragged and slatternly, but with something of a figure. Her eyes were sharp and shifty, greyish, and her mouth was all wrong—down at the corners but tightly closed. I suddenly felt very sorry for Flannel Feet. He reached out for her, but she evaded him.

“You and yer woodland cot! Crawl back into it, an’—an’ snuff it,” and she hurried away into the woods at the other side of the clearing.

Flannel watched her go with a dazed look on his drunken face, and when she had disappeared completely from his sight he turned about, looking vacantly, as if lost, all round the place. Then he quietly collapsed on his haunches and sat, leaning slightly forward, staring dully at the ground in front of him.

I felt as lost as he looked. What the devil to do? I did not know, so I also sat down on my hunkers and stared with only half-seeing eyes at the soil. All kinds of queer notions were playing about in my mind. I suddenly remembered old books I had read, ages ago, in another life it seemed, books about love and passion, and duty and honour, and courage and cowardice, and God and another world. And I felt very cold, and very lonely, and empty of all that my reading had ever meant to me. I shivered, and

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arose. Flannel was creeping back into his kennel.

I returned to the hut, flung myself on to my cot and fell into a deep sleep. On the next shift Flannel Feet seemed to be very much with me. I was uneasy, so as soon as I could I slipped away again into the woods and made for Flannel's hut.

Everything was quiet when I arrived. I walked straight up to the hole in the bushes where I had seen Flannel crawl in and bent down to enter. It was really ridiculous to call the place a hut or to regard it as a possible habitation for a human being of any kind. It was a dirty, damp, smelly hole with room for a lair of leaves and straw, a filthy den for an unclean creature. There was a log to sit on, and lying about were a kettle, pan, and billycan.

Flannel Feet sat on the log. In the semi-darkness I could only just see him. His eyes were fixed on me, and he seemed to be biting the end of a piece of thick twine. I flopped down and looked more closely at him. The end of the twine reached down to the ground. In his left hand he held a box of matches, open, and his right forefinger was poking about after a match. He seemed set in that attitude, his lower jaw down, his mouth full, his eyes half pitiful in their glare.

Then I saw what he was up to. The twine was not twine—it was fuse! And it was capped, and the cap was well set in a full "pill" such as we used for blasting, and the pill was in Flannel's mouth.

Here was a pretty mess. Tragedy was upon us at least, through Flannel Feet! If that fuse burned and the cap struck, Flannel's head would be—or rather it would not be anything any more. With the hut of boughs, and leaves and rags, it would be scattered about the clearing. And I was in the hut, so —

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"Hell and twenty," I shouted, "you daft pig —!"

Flannel bit harder on the pill and tried to speak at the same time—a gurgling sound came and his eyes goggled. The beer had bitten him, and Lizz had helped to upset him completely. I jumped up, banging my head on a branch and as suddenly sat down again. Then I laughed.

"You would muck it up," I yapped. "Can't even do a job like that properly. Can't you see the fuse is too long? It'll take it four minutes to burn. Besides, you can't reach the end of it. Here, give me those matches."

I snatched the box of matches out of his hand, took one out, struck it carefully and held it in the hollow of my palm until it burned clear, and then lit the end of the fuse.

Flannel's eyeballs were a shocking size, as if they had grown and the lids disappeared. He still made slight, futile, gurgling sounds, and from the line of his jaw I should guess he was biting on the pill harder than ever.

The fuse was fizzling nicely, I saw to that, and I turned to him again.

"There you are, you bloody lop-eared idiot. Get on with it. Pity your dirty bitch of a Lizz isn't with you too."

I think the mention of Lizz must have stirred him to a fury of realization of what he was in for. He breathed in through his nose, opened his mouth wide, and half blew, half spat the pill into my face. He broke into a torrent of curses, calling me all the names he could think of for interfering with him. What in hell had I to do with what he had to do! I was always meddling in other men's affairs. Then he went for me.

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When we started the fuse was still burning, that I saw clearly, but what happened to it in the scrap I do not know. Flannel was a bigger, older, a more experienced and a much better fighting man than I. Also he was fighting mad for once, in a blind fury that I had shoved my nose into his private affairs and taken the job of lighting the fuse out of his hands. I did my hopeless best. The hut was wrecked in no time. We fought it out in the clearing and he half murdered me....

But what put my back up and caused me to chuck the job in the end was that Flannel always hated the sight of me afterwards—and became a camp favourite for having pasted me!

HUMBERT WOLFE

THE LIMITS OF OBSCENITY

Is it possible, I have been driven to ask myself, as I contemplate the orgiastic development of the most admired contemporary literature, that there exists anywhere in the Anglo-Saxon world such a thing as romantic love or happy marriage? I am indeed so overshadowed by what all the young and vigorous write, and the old and feeble applaud, that I am positively embarrassed to commit the words "romantic love" and "happy marriage" to paper. I feel as though I had appeared in evening dress wearing brown boots, or as if I had mistaken a Lett for a Lithuanian. Nevertheless I console myself by remembering Danton's ejaculation, and I propose to have the courage of my futility.

I will, I mean, ask whether when pornography is not only a cult but a faith it may not, like other (no doubt less noble) religions, disturb literature by imposing its propaganda upon it.

The origin of this return to the jungle is, of course, obvious. Both in the United States and in England during the greater part of the nineteenth century the facts of sexual life were resolutely ignored by authors in deference to universal public opinion. All young men were, *ex hypothesi*, virgins until marriage, while if a girl were betrayed she instantly became a spectral type, waiting by night in deserted streets, like Peggotty's "little Em'ly." A good deal of rather

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coarse thinking was concealed under words at least as disagreeable as the facts they were intended to conceal. To take two examples, the word "flirt" was used to uncover a multitude of sins, "flirtation" was the sniggering translation of a "liaison," and a "lady-killer" was what we now should more pertinently call a sex-maniac.

Moreover, veils were always being drawn at critical moments. Marriage, it is true, even in the nineteenth century, led to child-bearing, but so etiolated was the account that one might reasonably have supposed the event was an automatic consequence of the marriage ceremony, requiring no personal intervention by the parties concerned. The idea of penetrating into the bedroom was so remote that in any decently-constructed house of the period that apartment would inevitably have been omitted, or at any rate, if it had been permitted, it would only have been furnished with a single bed.

Unfaithfulness was indeed envisaged, but always with all the severity of the Decalogue. If there was a certain indulgence for the male sinner (perhaps not unnatural when the majority of the books were written by men) all authors were Nathaniel Hawthorne, or rather Nathaniel Hawthorne's New Englanders, to the erring woman. The days of such unfortunates were all scarlet-letter days. It seemed, if one were to believe the testimony of literature, that adultery or sexual irregularity of any kind was with the Anglo-Saxons as rare and horrible as murder. The French, it is true, continued in their incontinental way, but that merely threw our righteousness into a more dazzling relief. If blameless Americans and Englishmen were occasionally misled by foreign syrens, it was only too clear on whom the blame rested.

The reaction against this deliberate suppression of

the truth was bound to be violent, but it was slow. Tennyson, greatly daring, told the story of Enoch Arden, returning after his supposed death, to find his wife living with another. Bitterly was he attacked for not having caused Enoch to denounce the sinners. And that though the language used was so delicate that it was often difficult to be sure whether the persons affected were not like Millais' cherubs, merely painted angelic faces unattached to bodies.

Swinburne, on the other hand, and "the fleshly school" of poetry did attempt to redress the balance of the New World by bringing in the Ancient. But sinister as were "the roses and raptures of vice," they were so Greek and Tuscan, so Aphrodite and Priapus, that the public, following the amiable and anonymous lead of honest John Morley, were prepared to regard the whole affair as Lemprière's Classical Dictionary in eruption rather than an incident in any way connected with ordinary life.

The first genuine turn of the tide was with the Nineties. Apart from the figures that we do not regard as typical of the period, such as Thomas Hardy, George Moore, de la Mare and Yeats, there was a great rallying to the standards of vice. Oscar Wilde and Aubrey Beardsley let it be generally known that virtue was a bourgeoisie and that her acquaintances were commuters. The young men and women of the period, who aspired to intelligence, were all Fleurs du Mal, pale passion-flowers that died instantly if exposed to the gross winds of decency. They were Verlaine, they were Baudelaire, they were Maupassant; they were, in fact, rather imbecile.

Indeed, their follies obscured the fact that a definite and desirable change was coming over the public attitude in this matter. Thomas Hardy ventured in *Jude the Obscure* to mention pregnancy in terms, and was bludgeoned into sullen quiet.

George Moore, whom Pater loved to call "my dear Audacious," had the temerity in *Esther Waters* to describe child-birth. The fact that children will go on being born in large numbers made this public admission of the fact all the more disgraceful. But George Moore, like Theocleides who danced his wife away, did not care. He continued to state the facts of life with such fantastic precision of loveliness that it began to be difficult for the Anglo-Saxon world to avert their eyes.

Indeed, though Hardy and Moore did not know it, the battle was won. With the arrival of Gilbert Cannan and D. H. Lawrence at the beginning of the twentieth century everything was over except the shouting. But heavens! how they have shouted, and, like all other revolutions, this one, after destroying the old régime, burning the churches, expelling the monks and nuns, and having stormed the Bastille, proceeded to re-establish tyrannies of every kind by the age-old trick of describing them as freedoms.

In the English-speaking world the three great figures in the revolution are Lawrence, James Joyce and Aldous Huxley, though such writers as Hemingway, Dreiser, Cummings and Mencken have not failed heartily to abet the leaders. These three have all approached the problem from different angles and with different aims. But, though they did not or do not know it, they are under one command—the well-known General Restlessness. And, again unconsciously, they have operated as allies finally and completely blasting the Romantics—who continued to believe in love—out of their positions.

Of the three, Lawrence is the prophet of the Phallic Emblem, Joyce, the unprejudiced journalist, and Aldous Huxley, the angry chemist analysing its composition and constantly finding that it won't correspond to his preconceived formulas. The prophet, unlike

his Biblical predecessors, had overwhelming honour in his own country. He denounced his countrymen as cold-blooded Satanists of repression, and they thanked him : he ridiculed their dearest prejudices and they founded societies in his honour; and finally he committed what amounted to an indecent exposure of their persons and they agreed, through the mouth of their Arnold Bennett, to regard him as the most striking genius of the age.

That Lawrence had genius is, of course, not open to question. Nor is it open to question that in preaching the return to the procreative principle he had a true and fertilizing vision of life. The Victorians had denied the processes of generation and birth. Not unnaturally literature grew barren in consequence. Lawrence not only did not deny them, he asked whether anything else in fact did or could have reality. His genius of itself insisted upon a hearing and rightly achieved it. But his doctrine fortified his right and his claim. He was a prophet with a new gospel of love—he bade mankind be naked and unashamed.

James Joyce equally was among the liberators, but freedom for him was not a doctrine but a fact. When he wrote the last memorable pages of *Ulysses* he was not holding his characters up as either a warning or an example. He was with passionate directness recording what he had seen with his eyes and felt with his hands. “Yes,” he was shouting to the world that had faintly whispered “No”—“yes, yes, yes.”

Huxley, on his side, no less than Joyce, admitted and proclaimed the existence of the body—indeed, its insistent ubiquity. But unlike both the others, he actively loathed—and loathes—what he could not deny. The Swift of our days, he mercilessly and sometimes abominably exposes a truth that he himself detests.

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These three in their different ways have each attained the limits of obscenity; each at one point or another decisively crossed them, and the combined result both of their travels and their transgressions has been almost to abolish these limits for the contemporary world of letters. It is worth, for an instant, considering the points at which each crossed the line.

In Lawrence's case it is not, as some might suppose, the glee with which he scribbles schoolboy words on the wall in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. On the contrary, the actual release given by that exercise to something dark and raging in Lawrence makes that book essentially saner than *Women in Love* or than some of the outbursts in the poems, notably *Pansies*. Lawrence crossed the line not in any single passage but in the growing and relentless morbidity which carried him steadily further and further from art to pedagogy. In book after book his genius was muffled by his urgent need to express the inexpressible, to give words to what was only possible in action, and to relive in public what is only significant when it is transposed in private. More and more he became an inverted Victorian, eagerly averaging their false silences by his no less false clamour. As long as the body or the loins were part of the story, they were not obscene because, though art conceals art, it has nothing else to conceal. But when the body was hoisted into public view like an exhibit at a political demonstration, it acquired the cold medical obscenity of the merely curious. The body and its exercises are a reasonable occasion for art; they are not, as Lawrence grew to believe and led his disciples to believe, the only occasion.

James Joyce surpassed the limits not in his choice of language because plain words have no intrinsic beastliness. Their beastliness is derived from the ugly minds and the evil breath that clings to them

like palpable soot. Joyce does not exceed in the words but by the pitch at which he pronounces them. They are not spoken, they are shouted; they are not shouted, they are thundered through an amplifier. As a result, the physical side of life suffers from elephantiasis. Joyce may record the details of a laundry bill and of a sexual encounter on the same page with the same apparent impartiality. But by virtue of some intrinsic fury the laundry bill is printed shyly in spiritual minion; the sexual encounter headlines it in clarendon.

Aldous Huxley in his turn exceeds because his motto in this regard is "*odi quia amo.*" He has observed the human animal with an ever-waxing passion of distaste. In a justly celebrated essay on Swift he recorded the Dean's loathing of his own (and everybody else's) tripe. Huxley went so far as to quote certain lines from one of the foulest poems that ever found their way into print in proof of his contention. But he knew that Swift was loathing every word that he wrote no less than the objects of his description. So too Huxley in his ecstasies of hatred brutally records the death of an imbecile girl from fish-poisoning and erotic moments which might embarrass a moderately-minded gorilla. He himself is almost an Eastern ascetic in his purity of volition, but the very measure of that internal chastity is the rage with which he permits facts to defile themselves.

These three are all great men. Individually and jointly they have performed an abiding service to themselves and to letters. But they have opened the gates and the fools of all countries, sexes and ages are pouring through in their charabancs hooting and exchanging hats. If there are quiet places anywhere in the soul, if there are left the tranquillities of domestic love, if in peace some gently contemplate

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flowers, beasts or birds, be sure the raucous crowd of the emancipated will come roaring on with their rattles and their bawdy songs. Their slogan is "Conventions are dead! Live the Conventions!"

The Victorians denied the existence of sex: they deny the existing of anything else. The Victorians were prudes; they would, if they were permitted, write exclusively on lavatory paper. The Victorians were guilty of a sickly sentimentalism; they are guilty of a sickly anti-sentimentalism. The Victorians pretended to a virtue they did not possess; they claim vices of which they are incapable.

In a word, the wheel has come full circle. The dull stupidities of non-sex have yielded to the stupidities no less dull of universal sex. Indeed, one may say bitterly, of the two extremities it is sex of one and sex of the other. "Nothing too much," cried the Greeks. The Victorians read that as "too much of nothing," but our contemporaries yodel "Nothing can be too much."

And both are equally wrong.

A. L. ROWSE

SUNDAY AFTERNOON WALK
TO THE HOSPITAL

The tuneful village is for this hour quiet, as I pass. It is the after-dinner hour in the mean houses, the hour of slow digestion, ruminativeness and lubricity, invited and repulsed. In the upper windows, cheap muslin is drawn over the cheap copulations. The stript monkey-tree rises forlornly over the huddled houses, baring its indignity to the upturned roofs. In the house within the shadow of its desolation, a chink in the curtains reveals the agitated muscles of a forearm, a hasty foraging of under-linen on a sofa. A gramophone is turned on and they embrace to the tune of *Jesu, Lover of my Soul*. Somewhere somebody drums wearily another hymn-tune on a piano. A cat calls, urgent with desire, behind the houses.

Yet other houses rise among the heaps of sand, strewn concrete blocks, water-butts, taps, pipes, earthenware drains, planks, poles, asbestos, tiles, hods, shovels, mortars, watering-cans.

In the disused cemetery, as I pass, a robin sings winterly in the echoing chambers of a tree. The air is ripe and mellow as an autumn pear. Head down-hill the rude forefathers sleep, ignorant of the church, that they may the better rise eastward to the Resurrection Day.

As I pass through the town, the streets are bone-the houses for the people. The church clock stands

empty, deserted, it being Sunday. One can now see at five to three. Under a roof hard by the Hospital, voices are heard in praise within a shut building; one voice raised above the others, harsh and arrogant, impressing itself, subduing them, insults the air.

Within the Hospital, the wards are gay with white linen, and flowers, for it is visiting day. A subdued murmur rises, as I pass an open door. The memory of the scent of ether clings to the swept corners, the smell of medicaments and cleanliness. *Mortality, behold and fear.* See this pale woman, the red gold hair in a heap about her, her amber eyes burning from the pillows propping her up: she will not see the day again. A child plays brightly by, surrounded by her flowers and toys that strew the counterpane. A man goes out of the door, as I pass, fear in his eyes, hopelessness in the melancholy droop of the hands.

AGNUS DEI

The street moves towards the hall where to-night the great singer will sing the *Agnus Dei*. The crowd surges on to the pavement, extinguishing the plaintive note of the decayed violinist, passes into the café where a few stragglers are finishing their meal. The little waitress with the prominent teeth and sanguine air, runs forward under a load of heavy dishes, steers into port with self-satisfaction and relief. "You aren't my table," she says unconcernedly to the elderly gentleman trying to catch her eye. A consumptive in the corner chokes over the spattered remains of egg and toast; he struggles hopelessly with his cough, holding up the evening paper against the inattentive eyes of the world. *Pay at the desk, please. Pay at the desk.*

At the desk a woman sits behind the grille, wearily counting out change to the customers. From the enclosed box, the grille emits the heavy odour of her body, perfumed but subtly penetrating, acrid and sweet.

Outside the hall an old woman with strange still features, strikes the attention. She hesitates on the edge of the pavement. She is carefully dressed. I look again: they are the clothes of before the War. There is an unawareness in the straightened passive face, her eyes withdrawn upon herself, unaware of what is passing. She holds her long white ermine scarf cross-wise, holding off the world with a gesture of lost magnificence, keeping her distance. She thinks she is a queen standing alone there at the edge of the pavement. She attempts to cross: the traffic bears

down upon her. The dream collapses. The world breaks in upon her again; she is for this moment aware; her vision broken, clutching her scarf in despair, she cowers in the angle of the wall.

Within the hall, the bust of the singer appears among the massed flowers, in white. The lights dazzle; the hard gems glitter. There is excitement in the hot air, the buzzing of preparatory strings. Silence and the indrawn breath of many people.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi!

Agnus Dei, she mouths, exalting her breasts to the lights and the glare of the myriad eyes. With the assumed air of a child, in white innocence among the flowers, she holds the eyes of the young men.

She comes to an end in false humility, disguising the false triumph. *Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.*

The lights are fading. The end is come.

Please pay at the desk. Agnus Dei. Pay at the desk.

J. M. REEVES
HANDS AND FACES

*Think
that our brows were bridges,
two-arched,
and vision the deep stream
sweeping between.*

*Think
what a freight of thinking
(and hands were troubled)
passed in procession on the water :
thought of rare fashions of thought; thought
of primitive people with expressionless faces,
how their nakedness expressed them.*

*Think then
we have lost this,
having only hands and faces,
what a burden of expression the hands and face must bear
now we have forfeited the body.*



Drawing by *Grigor Piralian*

WILLIAM EULBERG KELM

THE WEDDING

All the morning men worked in the Towers' back-yard, erecting a gay canvas-topped refreshment booth, hanging lanterns, building an altar at the water's edge between two baby elms. But Jettie Towers didn't seem to mind the excitement. She walked serenely, her head high. She talked quietly and made her gestures with studied precision.

A dressmaker kept calling about a last minute change on Miss Selma's dress. No, Miss Selma hadn't got back from Madison yet. She was trying to match the lace there.

Then Henderson came in.

"Why, Henderson dear," said Jettie, looking up from a basket of larkspur over which she was fussing, "you didn't let Selma go *alone* to Madison?"

"Doc Williams went with her," he said without concern.

"Selma must have been disappointed *you* didn't go with her," she said, watching him closely.

"On the contrary, I think Selma was quite happy," said Henderson.

"Oh, really?" Jettie poked at a spray of the larkspur, then kicked the corner of a rug into place.

"Yes, and it doesn't make any difference. . . . I—I mean, I preferred to stay here and help you."

"Henderson dear," she said, her eyes still on the larkspur, "you're so considerate of older people."

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"You're not—er—older . . . that is, *really*," he told her. "In many ways you're younger than Selma. That is, you're simpler, freer, like young people should be."

She paused in her work to look at him. Then something caught in her throat and wanted to be expressed in words. But instead her laugh came, a trifle forced and foolish. "You dear silly boy," she said gently.

The gold of her hair mixed with the sun and the bright yellow of her smock with the bronze-coloured figures in it and gave youthful vitality to her pale oval face and gravely expectant eyes.

"You're wonderful!" he said, sprawling at her feet.

She looked into his eyes deeply. "I've always wanted a son like you," she told him, the boyish angularity of him catching her imagination. Then she said to a servant. "O, Mary, *not there!* Those yellow roses go on the altar."

"Forget all *this* for a moment, can't you?" he said, his dreamy eyes heavy with reproach, "and tell me some more how you wanted a son like me."

"Henderson," said Jettie, running her long white fingers through his bright sandy hair, "perhaps it wasn't a son I—I wanted after all." Then she jumped up. "No, *no*, Mary not on the end. More this way." She ran to show Mary what she meant.

He followed Jettie with his eyes. Her liteness, as she ran, was exquisite. Selma had that liteness too, but she didn't have the living warmth her mother had. Her mother made a man feel that *he too* had living warmth. And Selma . . . well, Selma didn't seem to have urgent need for anything. She was lovely in her superiority. Her mother was lovely in her need.

Then he said that he would take the launch down the river for a bit.

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"But be back for lunch, please," said Jettie. "Those friends of Selma's from Chicago will be here by then, and I'm positively terrified."

"All right," said Henderson. Then he ran out on to the pier and got into the launch. Soon Jettie heard the noise from its motor rise and fall on the morning, as the launch vanished round the bend in the river below her house. She continued to stand before the altar, looking over it, her eyes on the swift current flowing in the direction whither he had gone.

Shortly before noon Selma came in with the lace. "A perfect match," she said in a tired voice. Then she climbed into her roadster again. "I'm having lunch at the country club with Doc Williams," she said, and before her mother could remonstrate she was speeding down the driveway.

It was the second reference to Doc Williams that Jettie had heard that day. She wondered why she hadn't been aware of him in connexion with Selma. She wondered why she had never asked herself whether Selma really loved Henderson. Was it because she was too busy thinking of Henderson as an ideal son-in-law to care about how much Selma thought of him? Oh, she must talk to Selma.

She went back into the house. The Chicago people were swarming all over it by now, dropping cigarette ashes on her Oriental rugs, spilling cocktails on the highly polished tables, singing with abandon. She wanted to shriek reproaches at them. Instead she murmured placidly, "Lunch will soon be ready, children."

"Oh, we're all on a liquid diet," said Cornelia, who had a great mop of copper hair curled into tight ringlets, and long legs that were constantly pattering out some new dance step.

"Well, children, you know where the cellar is. Make yourselves at home and have a good time."

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“Isn’t Selma’s mother a good scout?” said Cornelia after Jettie had gone.

“Sure,” said Milton. “Selma’s mother even courted Henderson for her. Say, I’d just love being worked on by a mother for a change. I bet her technique don’t drip like you girls’.”

“I see Selma’s off with Doc Williams,” said Geraldine, who had straight black hair and smoked glasses, and a thinness about her that was distinctive.

Then Henderson came into the room.

“I don’t have to be jealous,” he said. “You see—er—love between two people brings a mutual feeling of civilized security.”

“Hell, give me gin *then!*” said Cornelia.

At luncheon Henderson thought that perhaps he was a little easy with Selma. He was young and impressionable. He had never gone to school. When his father had died, he had gone on with his real estate business. Whatever ideas Selma had got at one of the great eastern institutions of learning must be *good*.

He knew Selma was proud of being able to influence him, get him to listen to her, agree with her, believe what she told him. Once they were married, she ought to start listening to him a little.

After luncheon he proposed that they should all drive up to Kilbourn to see the Dells.

“No, let’s not,” said Cornelia. “Let’s open another bottle of something and see the Rock of Gibraltar.”

“Let’s golf so I can keep my weight down,” said Geraldine.

“Make it swimming,” said Milton, “and I’ll invite Mrs. Towers to go along.”

So they went swimming, with Jettie staying at home

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and telling them to be careful not to have an accident. Last night Selma and some of her girl friends had run into a ditch on the way home from a barn dance at Pardeville. Jettie *couldn't* stand another accident before the wedding.

"Oh, I just adore drownings," said Cornelia. "I adore anything that's wet."

Then Jettie went to her bedroom and threw herself across the bed. She fell asleep and was only awakened by Selma's steps in the hall.

"That you, Selma? What time is it? . . . Five? For mercy's sake, did you just get home?"

"Yes," said Selma irritably. "Now don't start asking questions. I've got to get to work on my face."

"Were you with Doc Williams all afternoon?"

For an answer Jettie heard the door to Selma's room bang.

Jettie called to her, "Did you see those Chicago idiots out at the club?"

"I saw them all right," said Selma acidly through the door.

Then Jettie ran downstairs to see if the cakes had come from Milwaukee. Her husband was there, walking about the rooms and getting nowhere.

"Where in hell are my cigars?" he cried. "I put them in that box on the library table, and —"

"Wilbur, go out in the backyard and see how nice things look."

"Damn weddings anyway!" cried Wilbur. "They wear on you, eat into your pocket-book, and tie you hand and foot for the rest of your life."

"Why, Wilbur!"

"Oh, Jettie, get me some soda, my indigestion's starting again."

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At dinner-time Selma wouldn't eat a bite. She wouldn't stir from her room. Wilbur was very angry. He liked to have his family together at meals. Henderson brought the Chicago people back after feeding them at the country club. That made Wilbur angry too. As though he weren't one to be hospitable at a time like this!

Jettie took a last look at everything, then went to her room to dress for the evening. Wilbur was there.

"It's hot and it's going to rain," he cried. "Of all the crazy things, asking people to sit outside when it's going to rain."

"It's *not* going to rain, do you hear?" shrieked Jettie. "You're only afraid you'll get bitten by mosquitoes. You always were afraid of bugs and things. A regular coward you are, Wilbur Towers. It's a pity Selma takes after *you*."

"O hell! where did you put that soda?" cried Wilbur.

Jettie ran down the hall to the bathroom. On the way back she heard Cornelia and Geraldine talking in their room.

"Fancy us hearing Selma tell Doc Williams on the golf course that she loved him," said Geraldine.

"Well, it's too bad Henderson's such a mutt he can't see it," said Cornelia.

"But she told Doc she'd never marry him because she'd have to fight him the rest of her life. She was going to marry Henderson and have it easy."

"Yeh, and then she gave out that hooey about it being more civilized to live with a man you don't love and have peace than to live with a man you do and have hell. She says it's an enlightened woman's duty. Blah!"

Jettie gulped. Selma was going to marry

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Henderson for the same reason that she herself had married Wilbur. Selma would never be happy with Henderson, any more than her mother had been with her father. Selma would realize after it was too late, as her mother had realized, that while love never made life easy, it was the only thing in the world worth living for. Loving, and fighting to keep loving, made life interesting and brought self-respect to a man and a woman.

Jettie rushed to her daughter's room. "Selma, I know," she cried.

"You know what, Mother?" said Selma, not looking up from her finger-nails which she was polishing.

"That you love Doc Williams."

"Well?"

"You must marry him then."

"Oh, but I mustn't," said Selma with a laugh, trying to take her mother lightly.

"I shan't allow it, Selma. I love you too dearly to have you ruin your life."

Selma went on polishing her finger-nails.

"Selma, doesn't my concern for your happiness prove my unselfish devotion to you? Because you know how very much I want to have Henderson for a son-in-law."

Selma said, without pausing in her task, "Mother, all along you've spoken of no one but Henderson for me. Now suddenly you change your mind, after I've made up mine. Well, you can't expect me to change like you."

"Selma, I'm going to tell Henderson."

Selma jumped up. "If you tell him," she said fiercely, "I'll never forgive you."

Jettie fled from her daughter's room. Oh, it wasn't fair to Henderson. He must know, he *must*.

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She joined her husband downstairs. Where was Henderson?

“Henderson dear.”

He came to her. “Mother,” he said, “I’ve had a long talk with Selma. I’m sure we can be very happy . . . with a little help from you.”

“Why, Henderson, who ever supposed for one minute that you *couldn’t* be very happy?” said Jettie, bracing herself. Of course she wouldn’t tell him about Selma and Doc Williams! If she did, he’d go away, and she’d never see him again. Besides, she couldn’t betray her daughter. No mother who loved her daughter as she did could. Anyway, she was probably exaggerating the whole thing. Selma’s feeling for Henderson might ripen into love. Just because hers for Wilbur hadn’t was no saying that Selma’s for Henderson wouldn’t. After all, Selma must make her own life as she saw best.

Then it was time for the ceremony. The guests had all assembled in the backyard under myriads of soft lights that were caught up by the night and the river and merged to form one rhythmic mass. The surrounding streets and yards were jammed with the uninvited curious. Even the river was congested with boats. One woman, in an effort to get a good look at the bride, lost her balance and fell with a great splash into the river. There were mosquitoes and river flies, and the warning of rain.

Selma was unattended. People supposed from this that she wanted all the attention for herself. She was in peach-coloured lace, with a great peacock tail train and a pale rose behind her ear. She looked so composed and beautiful that every one agreed she was a perfect queen. Wilbur couldn’t keep in step with his daughter and made silly little bows to the guests.

Henderson was waiting before the altar. He looked

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a little nervous, but whatever doubts he had had about Selma were miraculously vanished now in his poignant sense of the beauty of the moment.

Selma's face was set as she neared the altar. Doc Williams, in his place very near the altar, kept wetting his lips with his tongue, his eyes on the grass. Jettie wanted to scream, "For God's sake, stop this mockery!" Some one sang *By the Bend of the River*, and when he came to the words, "I hear my true love calling," Jettie was sure that the people behind her heard her sob. She was conscious of nudging and an exchange of looks. She turned round and said, "It's so dreadfully hard losing a daughter."

Now the minister was reading the words that would join Selma and Henderson. Jettie closed her eyes and wondered what was going on in the mind of her daughter. Wilbur's chest puffed with pride. Henderson was a real catch : he was making lots of money.

There was faint lightning on the horizon, followed by a rustling among the guests. Suddenly Jettie wished a cyclone would sweep them all into the river.

Then it was over. Selma and Henderson turned from the alter. There was a dramatic embrace. Selma had contemplated it for days before the wedding. After that, Jettie found that she could not kiss her daughter, could not wish her happiness. People would notice, but she *couldn't*. Oh, she'd run away to-morrow. To Paris, anywhere, forever, and *forever*.

Doc Williams came up to Selma and kissed her. "You're doing beautifully," Selma told him.

"Don't you worry, Selma," he said, "you weren't the first, and you won't be the last. I travel a good deal, you know."

"That's what I figured," said Selma cruelly, her heart pounding. "But with Henderson, I'm the first, and I'll be the last."

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Then it was time for Selma and Henderson to leave. Jettie stood on the front porch, supporting herself with one hand on a great white pillar. Wilbur stood next her, his arm round her shoulders. She suddenly wanted to lay her head on his breast and tell him to hold her tightly lest she should do some crazy thing to disgrace him.

Henderson came to kiss her good-bye. And when he would have placed his lips on hers, she closed her eyes and lowered her head quickly, so that they touched her cool pale forehead instead. Selma looked at her mother, but she was off with Henderson before the suspicion flaring up in her had taken root.

Then every one was gone, and Jettie and Wilbur got ready for bed. Wilbur said, "Is your gall bladder bothering you, Jettie?"

Jettie couldn't answer. Her throat was full, and she ran to the bathroom. She stood before a mirror for some time, studying her face, running her fingers over the skin. How prominently the lines seemed to stand out now. She had never known that she had any to speak of. Then everything was a blur, and a few minutes later Wilbur found her in a faint on the bathroom floor.

He was very tender with her, as on the night they had been married. Jettie never gave him a chance to be tender, she was so strong. He put her to bed, while she said nothing, just looked at him, searching his face.

When he had turned out the lights and got into bed, she called to him, "Wilbur dear, I wish you'd always be so sweet to me."

He grunted.

"It would help terribly *now*, Wilbur."

He grunted again. Then suddenly, "Jettie, my soda, quick. Damn it, I can't stand these night lunches."

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She jumped out of bed. "Oh, my poor Wilbur!" A moment later he yelled at her, "Stop, damn it, you're spilling it all over me."

She sighed and turned off the lights, and went back to bed. She told herself she had acted bravely. If Selma had acted like a coward, at least her mother hadn't. She had acted like a good wife and mother, and when the children got back from their honeymoon there was a lot she meant to do for them. They still needed a mother's guidance. Especially Henderson.

Jettie was asleep when finally it came on to rain, then storm.

HARMAN GRIEWOOD

“LA FEMME EST NATURELLE. . . .”

Doors suck in their chosen bodies from the street
And pattern them in crude relief upon the floor,
Distressed, disgraced, like antique broken amphorae
and lids encased.

They scampered through those four girls I saw
And sagged, sat
Quiet. Watch
Opening on their knees huge bags
With clasps pricking the soft music.
Their fingers come in touch
With concrete tokens of experience.

Old men watch. Paper hats sit on their skulls
And stain in rings green
With reticence and keen retentive looks
Children hand round cakes
And tweak the vitals of their elders :
Windsuckers cram their young with flints,
Fall off stiff in frost.

HARMAN GRISEWOOD

*The hands of the four girls lie in their plates.
I want you on Friday night
To sit next to, to eat next to
A very interesting, a very sad.
The daughter of a very great friend.
The fingers fall apart upon their plates.*

*O when will he bring their meat ?
Will he fold it in a flowered box and offer it ?
Will he fetch it out shyly
Pop it out suddenly
For a surprise ?*

*One spreading over me her black fan said
"I see you turning in the fractured evening mirrors."*

*I turned
And saw their girls' necks strained back.
A terrible unanimity shook them
And at once four heads came down
Falling to their broad plates
In a clap of laughter.*

*Will he whirl it towards them on prongs ?
Will he carry it in a bandage
Cauterized ? Will he clench it dripping in his jaws
Or will I see him brandish it in mute despair
And dive down the lift shaft ?*

*"When incubus meets succuba by day
Speaking low of biting liberty
I guess one angel in another's hell."
I see black leaves fighting like horses
Against the yellow panes.*

HARMAN GRISEWOOD

*Did he dangle it, jangle it, raw like a fiend his chains ?
Did he trundle it along inebriate ?
Did he conscript his fears and jingle his bones like
Or drop tender, as ash heaping in a grate, [money ?
And unremembering lie quiet ?*

*Out on the Serpentine a duck
Hurtles from the mist
Towards me walking home
And is off again like the night express.*

M. C. BLACKMAN

"ASK FOR MAMIE"

For Edwin Faulkner, the day's work at the bank was finished. He prepared to go home.

"What are you doing to-night?" asked Henry Martin, as they left the locker-room.

Edwin turned red and looked at the other. Henry might have been surprised if he had noticed the effect of his simple question. But he did not notice. Edwin was not the sort one noticed. He was thirty and wholly undistinguished in appearance. He was neither handsome nor homely. His size was average in every respect. His hair was brown. His eyes were a cloudy blue. He wore glasses, but when he left them off their absence was inconspicuous. His clothes were of a drab grey shade.

Henry continued, "If you have nothing special planned—"

"I have some studying to do," said Edwin.

"Studying?"

"I'm taking some courses in banking."

"I see. That's fine." Henry's tone was that of indifference. "Still, you ought to step out occasionally. You don't get around much, do you?"

"Well, no, I—"

"Bet you haven't had a date since you've been here. Have you?"

"No." Edwin was embarrassed. "I—you see—"

“That’s what I thought. It occurred to me you might like to go out with me to-night and get acquainted with some girls. There’s a dance on at Cinderella Garden, and I’m going stag. But there are always plenty of stray dames on hand, and we could pick up a couple and——”

“Thanks, but I’m afraid I can’t make it.”

“Do you good.” Henry was insisting without conviction. “Studying could wait one night, couldn’t it ?”

“I’m sorry” Edwin said, “but——”

“Some other time, then. If you change your mind about the studying, come on up to the Garden. I’ll be there around eight-thirty.”

He was off and a moment later Edwin too left the bank. Before crossing the alley alongside the bank building he settled his hat firmly on his head. It was a typical March day, and a gusty wind was whipping round corners. The gusts were particularly bad at the alley crossing, and Edwin was about to shut his eyes against a flurry of dust, when across the way he saw a girl struggling with a skirt which, regardless of the proprieties, the wind had blown awry. He had a glimpse of flimsy underthings, garters, a strip of pink flesh.

The revelation lasted only an instant. There was a momentary flat calm; the girl went on her way. Edwin too went on, but he was a-quiver with excitement. Considering how trivial the sight it was strange he should say, “Damn her!” He almost sobbed with anger. “Damn, damn women!”

He went home in a taxi. His salary allowed few extravagances, but his apartment was fairly large and comfortably furnished, and he lived in it alone. It was extraordinarily tidy for a bachelor’s home.

Edwin put away his hat and topcoat, and bathed, shaved, and put on another suit of a darker grey

than the other. Back in the living room, he lit the gas logs in the fireplace, switched on a reading lamp, picked up a book, and settled in an armchair.

For five minutes he read steadily—the book was a text-book on the principles of banking. Then he replaced it and took down instead a popular biography. For a whole hour this he kept open before him. Yet often his eyes wandered to the clock. At half-past six the biography in turn he threw aside. He picked it up immediately and returned it to its proper place.

Then, in the kitchen, he ate a cold meat sandwich, two slices of a tomato, and an orange, and drank a glass of buttermilk.

About seven he pressed a button on the wall. There was a knock at his door. He opened it and said, "Come in, George."

A middle-aged negro entered.

"Howdy, Mist' Edwin. Whut kin I do fo' you 's evenin'?"

"I—er—I need a pint, George."

George shook his head. "Boss, I cain't do you no good. I ain't got er drop on de place. Not er drop."

Edwin was taken aback. "You haven't any liquor?"

"No, suh; not even a smell."

"But, George, I've got to have some whisky."

"Sho wish I had some fo' you, Mist' Edwin, but I sold my last yestiddy, an' de man I gits it from ain't nowhere to be found. I expect maybe he's in jail."

"Don't you know anybody else?"

"Yes, suh; but I ain't had time to git none yit. To-morrer——"

"I've got to have it to-night," said Edwin in a flat voice.

"I sho is sorry, Mist' Edwin. Don't you know nobody else——?"

"No. I've never bought it from any one except you."

"Sho, now!" George exclaimed. "Den you mus' be a mighty light drinker. I don't reckon I've sold you mo'n a pint er month fo' de las'—"

Edwin grimaced. "I hate the damned stuff."

George was astonished. "You says you—"

Suddenly Edwin said, "Wait here a minute, George." He went to the kitchen and returned carrying a dark green bottle. It had a dingy and faded label; there was gold-coloured foil round its neck and its mushroom cork was held in place by twisted wire.

"Do you know anything about this stuff?" Edwin asked, holding up the bottle.

George showed the whites of his eyes. "My goodness! Dat's champagne. I ain't seen none er dat since I wukked fo' Gen'ral Mixon befo' de wah. Where at did you git hold er dat, Mist' Edwin?"

"I found it on a high shelf in the kitchen closet when I came here. It must have been there for years; it was covered with dust. This place was none too clean when I came here," he added.

"You been dat close to er bottle er real honest-to-Gawd champagne fo' three years an' ain't teched it yet?" said George.

"Well, I only drink to get drunk, and I didn't know anything about champagne. That's what I wanted to ask you: will it make me drunk?"

"Yes, suh, boss," said George, "it sho will."

"It's just wine, isn't it? How much will it take? A whole bottle?"

"Well, suh, if you drinks dat whole bottle, you'll be feelin' right peart. You'll be mighty nigh ready to call yo'self king an' go lookin' fo' a crown."

"That's all I wanted to know. Thank you, George."

But George lingered. "Mist' Edwin, le' me fix it up fo' you. I knows how to ice champagne proper, so's it will be de mos' good. An' if you could spare me jus' a leetle taste——"

"All right," said Edwin.

George found a pail and filled it full of cracked ice. He made a great show of packing the bottle of champagne in the ice and talked ramblingly of the days when he "wukked fo' Gen'ral Mixon." Edwin paid little attention. Presently he asked, "Isn't it ready yet?"

"Jus' a minute. It got to take on a chill, dat's all."

At last George removed the foil, twisted the wire from the cork, and worked at the latter with both thumbs. It sprang out, hitting the ceiling, and there was a loud pop.

Edwin poured out a cupful and handed the cup to George. "Bring the cup back to-morrow," he said.

George took the cup and the hint. "Yes, suh. Thank you, Mist' Edwin. I hopes you find it good like I said," he added as he went out.

As soon as George had gone Edwin went again to the kitchen and returned with two more bottles like the first. He removed the opened bottle from the ice and packed both the full ones in it.

"That ought to do it," he muttered.

He sat down before the fire, with the bottle in one hand and a cup in the other, and took his first drink of champagne. The beverage was extra dry, and the gas stung his nostrils. He sniffled, drank again, more cautiously, and then drained the cup. He waited a few minutes, pacing aimlessly about the room, before drinking another cupful. . . . In less than half an hour, the bottle was empty.

Edwin sat before the fire, belching gently now and then. When by and bye he stood up he decided he was quite drunk. He was surprised and pleased. "Whoops," he said softly. "It tastes good, and it works good. Must be good." He shook a forefinger waggishly at the clock. "What time, old witch? Must be going. Keep the home fires burning."

He took the pail containing the two untouched bottles of champagne into the kitchen and shoved it out of sight under the table. Then he combed his hair and put on his hat and coat. He stopped before a mirror and regarded himself critically, swaying slightly.

"Now, my friend." He addressed his image solemnly. "Now, my friend," he said again in a deeper voice; "you have achieved a proper state of intoxication. Alcohol has done its work. Your sensibilities have been dulled and your appetite sharpened. You are ready to keep your sordid rendez-vous with— Oh, blah!"

In the lobby downstairs he telephoned for a taxi and waited for it at the kerb.

"Marlowe Hotel."

It was a short ride. Edwin leaned back against the cushions. Presently the taxi passed the brightly-lighted Cinderella Garden. Traffic was thick there, and the cab slowed down. Edwin looked out. Young people were clustered at the ticket window; others were arriving; there was laughter and shouts and, muffled, the sound of dance music.

The Marlowe Hotel was a cheap-looking place. Having paid off the taxi, Edwin walked into the lobby. He stopped before the desk. The clerk on the other side of it got up and came forward. He was partly bald and had a toothpick in his mouth. Edwin looked at the bald spot.

M. C. BLACKMAN

"I want a room," he said in almost a whisper. Then, "I want a room," he repeated loudly, almost angrily.

"Yes, sir. With bath or without?"

"Without."

The clerk handed Edwin a pen from an ink-splotched potato, at the same time swinging the open ledger round on the desk. Edwin wrote "Henry J——" hesitated, then added, "Hopkins."

He paid the clerk for the room, and followed a white-coated negro porter to the elevator.

The porter operated the elevator, which creaked as it moved. They stopped at the fourth floor; the negro led the way down a dimly-lit corridor. Edwin stumbled slightly as his foot caught in a worn spot in the red carpet.

"Heah we is," said the porter. He unlocked a door, went in ahead of Edwin, and switched on the single light suspended from the ceiling by a cord. The room was small. The porter raised the sash of the window and drew the shade. He inserted the key in the lock on the inside and lingered. Edwin gave him half a dollar and mumbled something.

"Yes, suh, boss. Right away."

He went out. Edwin took off his hat and coat and threw them across the foot of the bed. The room had a faint musty smell. He went to the window, raised the shade, and opened the sash as wide as it would go. He drew the chair to the window, sat down, and looked out. The lights of the dance garden in the next block seemed to whirl kaleidoscopically, like a merry-go-round.

Suddenly he got up and reached for his hat and coat. At the same moment there was a knock at the door. He paused. "Come in," he said.

A girl came in, shut the door swiftly, and turned the key in the lock. She wore a green kimono which

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she held closely about her with one hand. Her hair was a mass of amazing curls. Her rouge was more generous than artistic. The crimson of her lips shouted. The edges of her finger-nails were black.

“H’lo, Babe,” she said.

“Good-evening.”

She glanced at the coat on Edwin’s arm and the hat in his hand. “Going some place?” She walked over and sat on the edge of the bed. “Sit down, Sugar,” she said, and let the kimono droop so that one silk-clad knee was exposed.

Edwin stood looking at her thoughtfully. “It must be the champagne,” he remarked.

“What?”

“If I had been drinking bootleg whisky,” he explained gravely, “I’d be glad to sit beside you. But now I don’t want to.”

“Suit yourself,” she said coldly, covering the knee.

“No offence. . . . Look at me,” said Edwin. “Do you think you could ever fall in love with me?”

“Sure,” she said, patting a yawn with an open palm.

Edwin laughed. “Let me tell you something. You won’t understand it but it might make you laugh. I am thirty years old, and I’ve never seduced a woman. Not even one who wanted to be seduced. I’ve never kissed a woman. Well, I did once, but I didn’t make her like it. I was too amazed at my daring. I never have dates. I’m afraid of women. . . . Say, do you know what romance means to me?”

She looked at him curiously, but did not answer.

“A five-dollar conspiracy with a hotel porter about once a month. That’s what it means. You, and more girls in kimonos named Gertie or Blondie.”

“Say, listen——” she began.

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“Wait a minute.” Edwin took his bill-fold from his pocket and handed her a bill. “That’s for your time and for listening patiently. Try not to yawn again, please.”

“You’re a funny guy,” she said, unconcernedly revealing her thigh as she tucked the money into her stocking. “You must a-been hitting the bottle before you come up here.”

“Yes,” he admitted, “I am pleasantly drunk. I know what I’m doing, you understand, but I don’t care. It’s a totally new sensation. Do you know, I now have the notion that I’m as good as any other man. I feel strong and bold. I feel interesting. I even feel attractive, if you understand what I mean. Do you know what I’m going to do now ?”

He put on his hat and coat.

“Are you leaving ? Better stay——”

“No. I’m going to the Cinderella Garden and pick up a dame, as my friend Henry Martin expressed it. I’m going to give her the grand rush. I’m going to make her like me, and make her want me as badly as I want her. If not to-night, then the next time, or the next. That’s the programme. And then I’m not ever coming back here any more. So good-bye, Gertie—or Blondie.”

He went out quickly.

From the hotel he turned towards the lights of Cinderella Garden. He walked quickly, looking neither right nor left. At the crossing he was knocked down.

He had walked straight into the path of an oncoming car. The screech of brakes and a woman’s scream mingled.

“Here, give a hand. Help me pick him up. . . . In the car.”

“Somebody call an ambulance.”

“T’ hell with an ambulance.... In the back seat.... Watch out for his head.... Hey, Mamie! Get back here with him. Let’s get going!”

The car was away before any one in the gathering crowd could ask what had happened. A moment later Edwin stirred and reached out gropingly in an attempt to pull himself to a sitting position. One hand encountered something soft and warm. It was a woman’s thigh.

“Gertie . . . thought I told——” He sat up and blinked at the girl beside him.

“Hey, Joe!” she cried. “He’s come to. He’s sitting up.”

The car stopped, and Joe and the girl on the front seat with him turned round.

“You hurt, Mister ?” Joe asked.

Edwin felt the back of his head. “No. I bumped my head, but it doesn’t hurt much. What happened ?”

“What happened! It looked to me like you was trying to bump yourself off. You walked out into the street like you was crossing an empty pasture. If I hadn’t stood on my brakes when I did, you’d a been scattered from here to the next county.”

“What you been drinking ?” the girl beside Edwin asked.

He looked at her. He was still a bit groggy. “Champagne,” he said.

“Ha! That’s a laugh. He says it was champagne made him act like that.”

“Is that what they call hair tonic now ?” said Joe. “Sure you feel all right, fellow ?”

“I’m all right. I’m not used to drinking champagne.”

The girl beside him laughed again. “He ain’t used to champagne. Like we are, hey, Elsie ?”

“Sure.” Elsie giggled. “Ask him for a drink, Mamie.”

“Would you like to have some?” Edwin asked politely. “I have two more bottles at home.”

“What do you say, Joe?”

“I say we’re being kidded.”

“Maybe he’s got something, anyway.”

“What about Jack?” said Joe.

“T’ hell with Jack,” said Mamie. “He can wait. He’s probably drunk already, anyway.”

“All right,” Joe said. “I could use a slug of good hair tonic. Where you live, Mister?”

Edwin told him, and five minutes later they stopped in front of Edwin’s apartment. He led the way up and ushered them into his living room, after switching on the lights.

“Sit down,” he said, “while I bring the bottles and glasses.” He went into the kitchen.

“Not such a bad dump,” said Elsie.

“Maybe he has got some champagne, or something,” said Mamie.

“Where’d he get champagne?” asked Joe.

“Search me. Still——”

Edwin came back with the pail containing the two bottles. He made another trip for glasses, and on his return found the three examining one bottle.

“It looks real,” said Joe.

“I’m sorry,” Edwin apologized, “I only have two bottles. I had three, but I drank one. I hope you like it.”

He thumbed the cork from one of the bottles. It popped convincingly.

“My!” exclaimed Elsie. “Just like the movies.”

Edwin filled three glasses and poured a little for himself. For the first time he saw his guests clearly. Joe was stocky and had a sleek pompadour. He wore a silk shirt and his trousers were a trifle short. His hands were huge. Elsie was red-haired and plump.

Mamie was a brunette and slender. Both girls wore close-fitting street dresses of dark material.

"This is the first time I ever had any champagne," said Elsie. "I like it."

"Me too," said Mamie. "It's swell."

"Tastes like the real McCoy," Joe agreed. "Has it got a wallop?"

"Yes," said Edwin. "It makes you feel good."

He refilled their glasses, but poured none for himself. Elsie got up from the couch and went and sat on Joe's lap. Edwin sat on the couch beside Mamie. He left a foot of space between them, but she promptly slid over beside him. He sat rigid, holding his glass in both hands and trying not to look at Joe and Elsie.

"You got a swell dump here," Mamie remarked, looking round. "You don't need a room-mate, do you?"

"No. I've never met a man I thought I'd like to live with."

Mamie laughed loudly. "Listen," she called to Joe and Elsie. "I asked him, did he need a room-mate, and he said he'd never met a man he'd like to live with."

Joe and Elsie paid no attention; they were having a somewhat complicated embrace.

"That Elsie," said Mamie. "Always talking shop."

Edwin didn't understand. In fact, he didn't understand half the talk during the evening. But he listened politely, laughed when they laughed, and offered a remark now and then. Several of his most commonplace remarks sent Mamie into peals of laughter. He didn't know why she laughed, but he laughed too.

"I feel good already," said Mamie presently. "How 'bout another li'l drink?"

"Certainly."

Edwin emptied the first bottle and opened the second. When the cork popped, Joe and Elsie sat up.

“Cheatin’, hey ? ” said Joe.

“Gimme, gimme,” Elsie cried, holding out her glass.

Edwin sat down by Mamie—close this time. She rested an arm casually on his shoulder. He stiffened, but after a moment relaxed against her warm body. Presently he poured more champagne, taking a little for himself this time, and when he sat down again he placed an arm round her. She caught his hand and put it on her thigh. When her glass was again empty Edwin offered her some from his. She drank a little, then took the glass and held it to his lips.

“Drink, Baby,” she cooed. “Good ol’ medicine.”

Joe and Elsie got up. “Say is there any more to this apartment ? ” Joe asked.

“Why, yes,” said Edwin. “There’s a bedroom and—”

“Check,” said Joe. “Elsie and me are gonna look at the furniture.”

“Certainly,” said Edwin. He started up.

“Never mind.” Joe raised a large hand. “We’ll find it.”

Mamie pulled Edwin back. “Sit down, stupid,” she whispered. She leaned over and blew into his ear. Inspired, he caught her and blew into her ear. She struggled and laughed gaily. Edwin kissed her. She responded.

“You’re a funny guy,” she said, “but you’re kind of cute.”

He kissed her again. “I’m glad you’re a brunette,” he said. “I like brunettes.”

“That’s good. I’m glad I decided to be a brunette.”

“I like you slender, too. But not too slender.”

“Speed and comfort both, big boy. That’s me.”

" You don't even know my name," Edwin remembered suddenly.

" Guess I'll call you Sham," she said. " For the champagne, see ? Good ol' champagne." She got up and poured herself another drink. " Gosh, I feel good." She giggled. " Wouldn't old Jack have a fit if he could see us up here, drinking honest-to-French champagne ? "

" Who is Jack ? "

" A guy I know. We was going to pick him up when we ran into you. 'Ran into you.' Ha! That's a hot one, ain't it ? "

" I'm glad it happened," said Edwin.

" Wish we had some music. Some hotsy-totsy dance music. I feel like shaking a hip." She hummed a tune, lifted her skirts a little, and danced round the room. Edwin watched. She was still dancing when Joe and Elsie returned.

" Yoo-hoo! " she waved to them.

" Any giggle water left ? " asked Joe. He picked up the bottle.

" Darn little, you tank. You two gonna look at furniture while me and Elsie sponge the bottle and chew the cork ? "

Mamie looked at Edwin. " Certainly," he said, " if you like." He was puzzled, but he led the way into the bedroom.

A minute or two later they reappeared. Mamie was laughing still, but now her laughter was tinged with scorn.

" Listen," she said to Joe and Elsie. " This guy takes me in to look at the furniture, see. He turns on the light, and he says, ' There's my bed.' And he says, ' There's the dresser, and this is the door to the bathroom. There really isn't much to see,' he says. And then he wants to know is there anything else I'd care to see. Can you feature that ? "

Joe grinned widely. "That's one on you, Mamie," he said.

"Let's go places," said Mamie. "Come on. Let's go see if Jack has passed out yet."

Edwin looked puzzled, surprised, and a little hurt. "I'm sorry you must leave so soon," he said.

"Yeah," said Joe. "I guess we better get going. Thanks a lot for the drinks."

"Good-bye, Sham, old top," said Mamie, at the door. "See you in the funny paper."

"Wait, please," begged Edwin, coming to life. "Just a minute." She waited; Joe and Elsie went out into the hall. "I—I'd like to see you again some time."

She looked at him. "Sure?"

"Really, I would."

"O.K. You can see me any night at the Marlowe Hotel. Any night except Thursday. And say, bring along some more of that bubble water, and it won't cost you nothing. Just ask for Mamie. Can you remember to ask for Mamie?"

Edwin's face flushed. He found he had to sit down. "Yes, I'll ask for Mamie—or," he added dully, "or Gertie or Blondie."

But he was talking to himself. Mamie had gone.

LAVERNE WEBSTER COLWELL

THE LAST SWIRL OF A VINE

*Some silver morning when the birds are high
above the western window and their flight
shakes dusty outlines in the brilliant light,
they will divide this cottage and the sky.
And they will cut your breathing like a sigh,
and make your fingers tangle and grow white.
But this will be as nothing to the fright
your heart will feel when they have said good-bye.
So children who reach upward for your hand
become in later years strange things to roam,—
they come and touch your lips and let you stand
against the shattered doorway of your home....
The last swirl of a vine . . . or you will be
a yellow leaf in autumn on a tree.*

G. W. STONIER

NOTES ON STRINDBERG

I

It often happens that the mature work of a great artist is overshadowed by his earlier performance, the qualities of which are less complex and more readily understood. Genius may be slow to develop; the public catches on quickly. Verdi is a striking example of such treatment, his best operas—the work of old age—being unknown to many admirers of his music. I shall deal here with the later Strindberg, ignoring his early life and art which are familiar.

He was mystic and neurotic. He owned worlds remote from the ordinary view and in him inextricably mingled. It is impossible to separate his spiritual struggles from his obsessions. Their juncture is responsible for all that is strange, and much that it is deep and original, in his art. The connexion between his life and his art is so near that the critic is given a double view of the same incidents and their controlling forces.

To step from the pages of his *Journal* to the scenes of *The Dream Play* or *To Damascus* is hardly so much as to change one's shoes to go into the street. The voice is the same, there is the same degree of intimacy and repulsion, the same frayed cuff, and the same volcanic calm. Examine any photograph of him taken between 1890 and 1910, read what

happened to him in those years, what he wrote; and you will find portraits and happenings and writings all agree. Morbidly sensitive in life, he was as an artist fearless and strong, a giant if ever there was one, and so he could dispense with those masks which even the greatest artists have found at times necessary to the continuance of their art. There lies his uniqueness as an artist. His greatness consists in an insight into human character as searching as an X-ray, a marvellous dramatic instinct (so that his life seems almost to be shaping itself for the dramatic forms to which it will be finally conveyed), a vision that is realistic with a poetry of its own, and an experience of worlds as visionary as Blake's or the Book of Revelation, yet which never leaves the precincts of common life.

I want in these Notes to examine critically the quality of Strindberg's experience, as a doctor might take a blood test. His life, one may say roughly, was a succession of periods alternating melancholy and calm. A period might vary in length from a day to a couple of years, but its curve was always approximately the same : a few days or weeks of an intense floating happiness, so vivid and tangible that it would seem they must last for ever; then, the abrupt descent, months, years even, of racking and incessant gloom, when he suffered the tortures of the damned; and the gradual return to light—each experience of this kind was more terrible and crucial than the last, each drove him nearer madness, telling the strength of further faculties. Simultaneously from each experience his art gained immeasurably.

The crisis of his life, after which he wrote his greatest plays, occupied the years 1894 to 1897.

II

In November 1894, he was alone in Paris, his wife having returned to their home in Austria. A few weeks before, he had attained the great ambition of Scandinavian writers—a play of his was being acted in Paris and was successful. Everywhere he had been fêted, applauded, interviewed. Yet even as he walked back from the station after his wife's good-bye, his happiness changed, grew exultant, free, ominous of the return to solitude. Women were the magnets of his life, and as the current turned they attracted or repelled. When he had work to do he retreated into himself. Now he was alone. In a small room in the Latin Quarter he began the first of his chemical experiments, to find sulphur in carbon—and after that, to search for gold! Almost at once his mood altered. “I am born into a new world where no one can follow me. Things which before seemed insignificant attract my attention, my nightly dreams assume the form of premonitions, I regard myself as a departed spirit, and my life proceeds in a new sphere.” He withdrew from friends, and wrote a letter to his wife, flaunting an imaginary mistress, which caused their eventual separation. Alone, he commenced the search for gold :

At the beginning of July the house is empty; the students have gone for their holidays. All the more is my curiosity aroused by a stranger who has taken the room on that side of mine where my writing table is placed. The Unknown never speaks; he appears to be writing on the other side of the wall which divides us. Curiously enough, whenever I move my chair, he moves his also, and, in general, imitates all my movements as though he wished to annoy me. Thus it goes on for three days. On the fourth day I make the following observations: If I prepare to go to sleep, he also prepares to go to sleep in the next room; when I lie down in bed, I hear him lie down on the bed by my wall. I hear

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him stretch himself out parallel with me; he turns over the pages of a book, then puts out the lamp, breathes loud, turns himself on his side and goes to sleep. He apparently occupies the rooms on both sides of me, and it is unpleasant to be beset on two sides at once. Absolutely alone, I take my midday meal in my room, and I eat so little that the waiter pities me. For eight days I have not heard the sound of my own voice, which begins to grow feeble for want of exercise. I haven't a sou left, and my tobacco and postage stamps run out. Then I rally my will-power for a last attempt. I *will* make gold, by the dry process. I manage to borrow some money and procure the necessary apparatus: an oven, smelting-saucepans, wood-coals, bellows and tongs. The heat is terrific and, like a workman in a smithy, I sweat before the open fire, stripped to the waist. But sparrows have built their nests in the chimney, and smoke pours out of it into the room. I feel like going mad over this first attempt, my headaches and the frustration of my efforts; for everything goes wrong. I have smelted the mass of metal in the fire and look inside the saucepan. The borax has formed within it a death's-head with two glowing eyes which seem to pierce my soul with uncanny irony. Not a grain of gold is there and I give up all further efforts.

He quickly became ill, haunted by omens and fantasies wherever he went. One day a mastiff would bar the way to a friend's house, his only refuge; he would see a child sitting on a doorstep playing with the ill-fated ten of spades; figures would appear in the dead coals, in the shadows of the room and the patterns of cushions. At night he walked the streets:

I enter the Rue Dieu. Why Dieu, when the Republic has washed its hands of God? Then Rue Beaurepaire—a fine resort of criminals. Rue Vaudry—is the Devil conducting me? I take no more notice of the names of streets, wander on, turn round, find I have lost my way, and recoil from a shed which exhales an odour of raw flesh and bad vegetables. Suspicious-looking figures brush past me, muttering objurgations. I become nervous, turn to the right, then to the left, and get into a dark blind alley, the haunt of filth and crime. Street girls bar my way; street boys grin at me.

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Vae soli! Who is it that plays me these treacherous tricks as soon as I seek for solitude? Some one has brought me into this plight. Where is he? I will fight with him!

As soon as I begin to run there comes down rain mixed with dirty snow. At the bottom of a little street a great coal-black gate is outlined against the sky. It seems a Cyclopaean work, a gate without a palace, which opens on a sea of light. I ask a gendarme where I am. He answers, "At St. Martin's Gate." A couple of steps brings me to the Great Boulevard.

.....

The fierce July heat broods over the city. I expect a catastrophe. In the street I find a scrap of paper with the word "marten" written on it; in another street a similar scrap with the word "vulture" written by the same hand. Popovsky [an enemy who had threatened him in Vienna] has certainly some resemblance to a marten as his wife has to a vulture. Have they come to Paris to kill me? He, the murderer, is capable of anything after he has murdered his wife and children.

The perusal of the delightful book *La joie de mourir* arouses in me the desire to quit the world. In order to learn to know the boundary between life and death, I lie on the bed, uncork the flask containing cyanide of potassium and let its poisonous perfume stream out. The man with the scythe approaches voluptuously and softly, but at the last moment some one enters or something happens . . . a wasp flies in at the window.

.....

Have I lost myself in a dark wood? The spirit has guided me on the right way to the island of the blessed, but Satan tempts me. I am punished again. I sink relaxed on my seat, an unwonted depression weighs upon my spirits. A magnetic fluid streams from the wall, and sleep nearly overcomes me. I pull myself together, and stand up, in order to go out. As I pass through the passage, I hear two voices whispering in the room adjoining mine. Why are they whispering? In order that I may not overhear them. I go through the Rue d'Assas to the Jardin du Luxembourg.

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I drag myself wearily along, feeling lame from my loins to my feet, and sit on a seat behind the group of Adam and his family.

I am poisoned! That is my first thought. And Popovsky, who has murdered his wife with poisonous gases, is here. He has copied the famous experiment of Pettenkofer, and discharged a stream of gas through the walls. What shall I do? Go to the police? No! for if I can adduce no proofs they will shut me up as a lunatic.

Vae soli! Woe to the solitary, the sparrow on the house-top! Never was my misery greater, and I weep as a forsaken child that fears the dark.

In the evening, I dare not remain sitting at my table for fear of a new attack, and lie on the bed without venturing to go to sleep. The night comes and my lamp is lit. Then I see outside, on the wall opposite to my window, the shadow of a human shape, whether a man or a woman I cannot say, but it seems to be a woman. When I stand up, to ascertain which it is, the blind is noisily pulled down; then I hear the Unknown enter the room, which is near my bed, and all is silent. For three hours I lie awake with open eyes to which sleep refuses to come; then a feeling of uneasiness takes possession of me; I am exposed to an electrical current which passes to and fro between the adjoining rooms. The tension increases, and in spite of my resistance I cannot remain in bed, so strong is my conviction: "They are murdering me: I will not let myself be murdered." I go out in order to seek the attendant in his box at the end of the corridor, but alas! he is not there. They have got him to go away; he is a silent accomplice, and I am betrayed!

The next morning (it was Sunday) he packed early and left the house, saying that he was going to the seacoast, but whispering to the driver to take him to the Rue de la Clef, near the Jardin des Plantes. Blessed relief! It seemed another Eden! He could sit for hours in the sunlight, looking round at the flowers, the summer-house, the walks, the open sky. Peace of mind came to him, a sense of deliverance and naïve poetic beauty; life began again quietly.

From Paris he went to Dieppe, Berlin, Saxen, and the small university town of Lund in Sweden. A horde of devils, witches, or doppelgangers attacked him, bringing with them the landscape of hell. Later, he wrote of these years : "The great crisis at the age of fifty; revolutions in the life of the soul, desert wanderings, Swedenborgian heavens and hells." To these his life in Paris was only the prelude. He became visionary, mad, clairvoyant. He was never far from the lunatic asylum whose high red walls and stricken inmates horrified and bewitched him. "Am I Phlegyas, Prometheus, Job ?" he would ask himself as he wandered in the inferno-like landscape, the great pinewoods and lonely valleys, with huge stones in them like old men or demigods. At the end of these years of inferno his mind cleared. He spent a year travelling round Sweden collecting the material for a book on flowers (the Sunday morning in the *Jardin des Plantes*), and in the next two years wrote six of his finest plays.

III

I have indicated the nature of his experiences at some length because they give the curve of his life, and because they form the background of his masterpiece, the trilogy of plays *To Damascus*. It may seem strange that experiences of this sort, bordering on madness, should assist in the production of a masterpiece or even allow of a lucid description (note the lucidity and detachment of the passages quoted); but in the transition from life to art there are queer changes, and what most people call sanity, sane emotions, or sane thought, if transferred literally to the page—but that is of course impossible—would look as shabby, as startlingly *unlifelike*, as a shopman in a window of wax models. What is plain is that

Strindberg's illness, in assaulting his nerves and brain, evoked a fighting spirit amid scenery of inferno-esque splendour. Experts are not apparently agreed on the exact nature of his illness : whether it was paranoiac, paraphrenic or schizophrenic. In his account of himself and in the vision and machinery of his plays, there are traces of all three types.

The world of the neurotic stands out stereoscopically beside the flat photograph of ordinary lives, three-dimensional, oppressive, horribly living. Imagine a teashop corner, one shiny table, a man sitting over an empty cup and a crumby plate, and behind him a waitress leaning on a radiator, the pale electric light coming down on both. It is so ordinary, one of the many clichés of existence, that most people, having taken the scene in at a glance, would dismiss it. But for the neurotic it may have some special meaning, be a part of his nerves and blood, which grips him like electricity; he would escape, but the current is strong and he cannot let go; he feels, "That man, that woman, seated, standing like that, have an intimate relation to me which is terrible; it is not accident that they are here, *they know me*; see, the man has looked my way, the woman has curiously smiled. . . ." So every detail of the scene may become part of him.

Look, again, at Van Gogh's picture, *The Bridge of Arles*, with its flylike figure half-way across a bridge in an expanse of canal, sky and wooden banks; at his pictures of sunflowers and of a chair, a room, a table, and a pair of boots. They strike the average spectator as being very ordinary yet very strange. Their spell is much the same as the compulsive interest of his surroundings for the neurotic.

I have mentioned Van Gogh. He and Strindberg have much in common. Both were solitary, funda-

mentally ascetic, and at times mad or near it. The famous *Night Café*, which Van Gogh painted more than once and which seemed to him fundamental of his art, might be the scene for *There are Crimes and Crimes*. I do not mean that, though. As artists, they have in common a *texture of experience*, a feel of life, a realism of existing surroundings, edged by neurosis, which in their art takes the place of symbolism while often serving the purpose of symbolism. There is an astonishing passage in one of Van Gogh's letters to his brother. "This evening I was at Pulchri. Tableaux and a kind of farce by Tony Ooffermans. I did not stay for the farce, because I do not like them and cannot stand the close air of a crowded hall, but I wanted to see the tableaux, especially because there was one after an etching, which I had given to Mauve: 'The Stable at Bethlehem,' by Nicholas Maes. It was very good in tone and colour, but the expression was not worth anything. The expression was decidedly wrong. Once I saw that in reality, not of course the birth of Christ, but the birth of a calf. And I remember exactly how the expression was. There was a little girl in the stable that night—in the Borinage—a little brown peasant girl with a white nightcap, she had tears of compassion in her eyes for the cow, when the poor thing was in throes and had great trouble. It was pure, holy, wonderful, beautiful, like a Correggio...." In Strindberg's plays, there is a corresponding grandeur of mean details. Misfortune is shown in the discomfort of cheap hotels, the delay of letters, the attacks of creditors and gossip of friends. The Hell Scene in *To Damascus* is an ordinary lunatic asylum. It is thus doubly terrible, for one feels, "This is a lunatic asylum, such as the one over the hill I pass in the morning," and in the same moment, "This is hell itself." The imagination is allowed no escape. Strindberg, Van Gogh

—they allow the imagination no escape; their art comes irresistibly full-circle, closing the net.

The nearest parallel ordinary people have to neurotic experience is in dreams (all neurotics are dreamers). There too everything is ordinary and looks strange, the personality of the dreamer pervades a whole landscape, moments are protracted to infinity, there is the apparent solidity and detachment of persons and scenery which a change or movement in the mind of the dreamer may suddenly reveal as false (like sunlight to a sick person). This dramatization that goes on in the head of a man asleep is one of the strangest and most fascinating qualities of dreams. The dreamer is unaware that he is inventing, events happen round him, scenes startle and develop as in life; he may wake with the feeling, "I have had a great experience," "I have been living through years," which will remain with him through the day, chequering his mood like the come-and-go play of sunshine, long after the details of his dream have receded.

The connexion between dreaming and artistic creation, and even neurotic hallucination, is obviously very close. In the life of artist, dreamer, and neurotic, unconscious thoughts are continually on the surface; the artist perhaps exercises control, whereas the dreamer and the neurotic are controlled by their unconscious thought. The problem raised has not yet been dealt with by psychologists.

Now, if you glance back at the passages from Strindberg's autobiography quoted above in Section II, you will notice perhaps their resemblance to dreams (I did not choose them with that object); the incidents might have happened to any one—in dreams. The resemblance is important, for the form which Strindberg adopted for his later plays (*The Dream Play, To Damascus, The Spook Sonata*) was a dream-

form. A good deal of nonsense has been written about "significant form," but one may say that the form of his great plays was significant to Strindberg who lived and suffered every turn of them. (The influence of sunstroke on the form of Van Gogh's later pictures may be compared.) Strindberg succeeded in expressing the *whole* of his experience, a rare achievement even for a great artist. He had no watertight compartments of his own ("the author in private life"); his experience directly moulded his art-form. One realizes the force of his assertion that "the only fiction worth while is that which deals unreservedly with the author's own self," for what seem on the stage to be consummate pieces of invention were in many cases literal transpositions of fact.

IV

To Damascus is one of the greatest dramas ever written. It has the simple essential quality, the utter isolation, of all great art. What surprised me most in reading it was not its queerness but its sanity, not its obsessions but its profound spiritual depth. I began by saying that Strindberg was a mystic as well as a neurotic: *To Damascus*, in the realm of art, proves this magnificently. I do not remember being so impressed and moved by any play since I first read *Lear*. No translation of *To Damascus* has been published in England, but I discovered a typescript version of the first play of the trilogy in the British Museum. If the rest of the trilogy is on a level with this part (and I am told by Continental critics whose opinion I respect that it is), then it is a truly magnificent performance. It is a morality play in terms of everyday modern life: *Swanwhite*, *The Dream Play*, *Legends and Zones of the Spirit* in one; as bare and direct as Greek tragedy, with a dream edge which is

alternately enchanting and terrifying. It has caught, too, in moments of beauty the stillness of Sunday morning in the Jardin des Plantes. The scenes are a street corner, a doctor's consulting-room, a bedroom in a hotel, a sea beach, a mountain pass, a cottage in the mountains, a lunatic asylum; and back in reverse order through the same scenes. The Unknown, a middle-aged poet, meets a doctor's wife, whose name even he does not know, and he hopes with her to obliterate the sufferings of the past. He gives her a name, an age, a character such as he would wish, and their struggle—against his past life—begins. These two characters dominate the play, Everyman figures yet individual human beings.

The scene is realistic in its detail. This soliloquy is taken from the first few minutes of the action :

UNKNOWN (*on a park seat, tracing with his stick on the ground*). It's Sunday afternoon! The long grey dull Sunday afternoon, when the people have had their cabbage and beef and boiled potatoes. Now the old folk are sleeping and the young ones are playing chess and smoking. The servants have gone to evensong, and the shops are shut. Oh this long dreary afternoon! Day of rest, when the soul ceases to stir; — then it is quite impossible to come across the face of a friend, as to get into the public house!"

Act II, Scene 2 begins thus :

A cottage on a cliff by the sea. Table and chairs outside. The Unknown Man and the Lady in summer clothing, they look younger than in the previous scene. The Lady is crocheting.

UNKNOWN. Three days of happiness and peace by my wife's side, and the sense of unrest returns.

LADY. What do you fear?

UNKNOWN. That this will not last long!

LADY. Why do you think so?

UNKNOWN. I don't know, think it must come to an end, suddenly, terribly. There is something false in this very sunlight and this calm, and I feel as if happiness does not form part of my destiny.

G. W. STONIER

LADY. Why, but all is made up; my parents are resigned! My husband understands and has written kindly.

UNKNOWN. What good is it, what good is it? Destiny is weaving her plot. I again hear the hammer fall, the chairs are being pushed from the table, the judgement has been passed, but it must have been passed before I was born, because already in my childhood I was working off the penalty! There is no time in my life to which I can look back with joy!

LADY. And you, poor husband, have got everything you wished in life.

UNKNOWN. Everything, but alas I forgot to ask for gold.

LADY. Now you are dwelling on that again.

UNKNOWN. Can you wonder at it?

LADY. Hush.

UNKNOWN. What are you always doing? You sit like one of Parces drawing the thread through your fingers—but do that. I know nothing more beautiful than to see a woman bending over her work, or over her child. What are you crocheting?

LADY. Nothing in particular, just to have something in my hands.

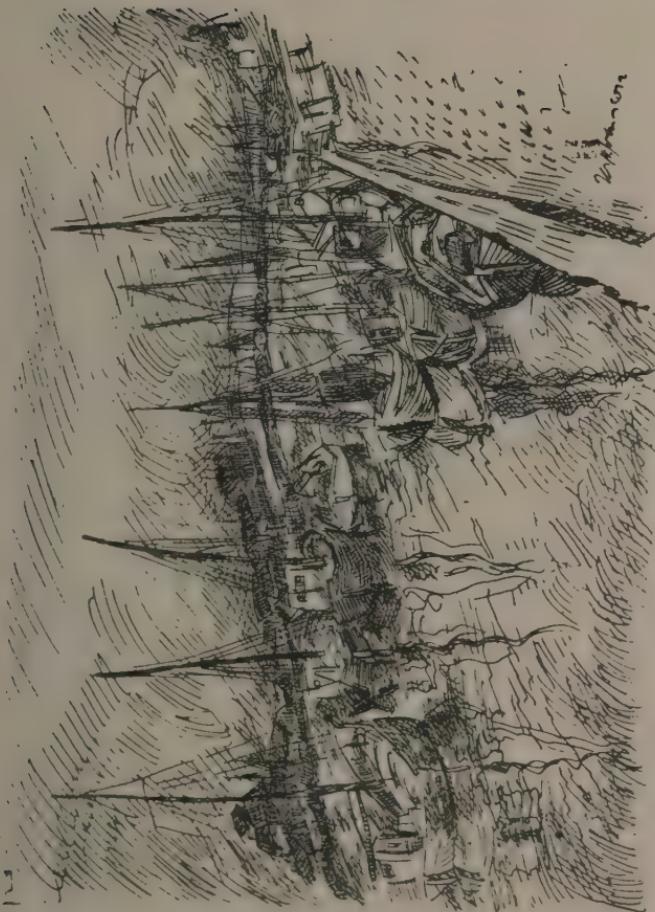
UNKNOWN. It looks like a net of nerves and knots where your thoughts are riveted together. I imagine that your brain looks like that inside.

LADY. If I only had half the ideas you credit me with; but I have no ideas at all.

UNKNOWN. Perhaps that is why I thrive so well in your company, and why I find you perfect and cannot imagine life without you! Now the cloud has vanished! Now the sky is high, the wind is warm, feel how it caresses one! This is to live; yes, now I live, just now! and I feel my being dilate, expand, grow thin as air, become infinite; I am everywhere, in the sea is my blood, the mountains are my bones, in the trees, the flowers.

So brief a passage gives only a taste of the play's whole quality, the sense of fate mixing with common life, the intense personal drama of the leading characters; and it shows hardly at all the essential dream-structure of the play. The premonitions, hallucinations and obsessions of Strindberg's own life

become here the devices of a pure and vital art. His apparatus for living, as I have shown it, could be a Heath Robinson affair, but for the purposes of writing drama it was marvellously compact and attuned. English criticism has tended to dismiss Strindberg as a rowdy Titan, "a hen-pecked Bluebeard" and Dickensian *fou*; it has so tended chiefly from ignorance of his best work. That some of his plays groan with an excess of spirit, I am willing to admit; but that is a characteristic also of Beethoven's late sonatas and quartets. There will always be critics who rank Bach higher than Beethoven, and critics who will put Ibsen above Strindberg. Nine-tenths of criticism has been written to prove that art is worth more than genius. For those who read the remaining tenth I suggest the study of Strindberg. Not all his books are masterpieces, but the four volumes of autobiography and *To Damascus* are unique in literature.



Drawing by W. H. Johnson

CARLTON BROWN

HALF-WIT

They paid him five dollars a month and food and lodging. That was all right. Five dollars would buy a lot of matches and tobacco and papers to roll cigarettes with. It was all right getting up at five every morning, milking the cow and keeping her clean and fed, feeding the chickens, collecting the eggs. Aside from that there wasn't much he had to do. He always smelled of the barn and they wouldn't let him eat at the same table with them, but that was all right. It was a lot better than being at the State Farm, anyway. He had a clean bed and a room all to himself with a mirror in it, and he wasn't herded around with a bunch of others like cattle. He didn't have to wear the same grey suit and grey cap just like everybody else did, and there wasn't somebody in uniform standing around all the time and watching, watching. He just had to look after the little work there was around the place and the rest of the time he could do what he liked, pretty much. Some Saturdays Mrs. Harlan would tell him to get dressed up and then George Harlan would come over from the Farm and they'd take the two kids and the Ford and have a day of it in Brockville. He'd put a lot of the swell perfume Mrs. Harlan had given him all over himself and they'd go to a movie or a vaudeville show in Brockville and sometimes have supper at the Chop-Suey Palace afterwards.

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When first Jim came to live with the Harlans, he ran away almost every month. When he was paid his five dollars he thought it would be enough to go a long ways on, but somebody always caught him and brought him back to Mrs. Harlan. After he had run away a few times, they stopped paying him the five dollars all at once and gave it to him just as he needed it. It was all right. Before that he had been at the State Farm, and he had had to work a lot harder there. And there was always a man in uniform there, watching him and the others and telling them what to do. He hadn't exactly been a prisoner at the Farm. It all happened like this.

When they let Jim out of the school in the Berkshires, he had got a job on a farm up there. He worked for the Austens for six whole years and they never had a fault to find in him. They treated him like a kid, though—he didn't know why—and once he had got mad and left them. They didn't have him caught and sent back—funny! At school, whenever he ran away they caught him and sent him back, but the Austens hadn't done that. He didn't have to look for that job with the Austens; he had been taken there from the school. They had said he was all right then. Maybe he had been free for a while. . . . After he got angry with them and called Mrs. Austen a dirty name, he ran away and they never tried to catch him. Why was it running always—and not just quitting his job? It was always running away; he could never be free from authority.

In Massachussets his luck hadn't been so good. He had found a job in Pittsfield—right across the border from New York and the Austens—cleaning streets. The work wasn't bad, and for almost a year everything went all right. One day he set fire to a pile of papers, as he often did—he loved to watch fires—and it had caught on to a house and almost burned it down. He

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had stood there and watched it burn, watched the firemen come up and squirt water on it. He must have been smiling when the cop came up and questioned him. And they didn't seem to understand that he hadn't meant to set fire to the house. Funny how people always thought there was something wrong when you smiled!

It was all right at the State Farm. They gave him plenty to eat, but he had to sleep in a big room with a lot of other men and a man in uniform watching all the time. The other men, most of them, were crazy, and Jim couldn't figure out why they put him in there. After a year called him a *trusty* and let him go out on errands all alone sometimes. Then George Harlan, one of the men in uniform who watched him and the rest, took him to their house in a car that Mrs. Harlan drove.

At first he had had a hard time with the kids. They called him "Nuts" and "Crazy," and that made him mad. Since he hit young George on the head with a rock, and split his head all open so the doctor had come and put stitches in it, the kids hadn't called him names. They were friendly now, and a little scared of him. Anne was teaching him how to write—he had forgotten all they had taught him at that school up in the Berkshires; he was no damn good at remembering—and he could write his name and all the letters of the alphabet. He wrote his name all over the books with pictures of harness and dresses and stoves and clothes and farm implements that Mrs. Harlan had given him. Anne would teach him more, too, but there wasn't much time. The only time she could teach him was when Mrs. Harlan was around. Mrs. Harlan never let Anne be alone with Jim, and Jim couldn't figure out why. Anne liked him all right, seemed like, and if she wanted to be alone with him that was her business. Jim thought if they ever

did get together it would be fun, anyhow. She was a pretty kid, and when she held his hand to teach him to write it was all he could do to keep from grabbing her. She was just a kid—only thirteen years old. If Mrs. Harlan only wouldn't be around all the time. . . .

There was a mirror in Jim's room, too. At the Farm there hadn't been any mirror—no big one like this, anyhow—and it was nice to have one that showed all of you. There was a toilet with a lock on it—all shiny and white. And when there was nobody at home—it happened rarely—there were all the other rooms to look into. It was fun looking through Mrs. Harlan's room. In the drawers were all kinds of exciting things: underwear, corsets, soft, desirable silk things. He had to be careful to get them back in order after he had finished looking at them, or Mrs. Harlan would have him sent back to the Farm. In the mirror he could see himself: see how funny it was when he made faces, combed his hair with grease until it lay down flat and smooth on his head. Then he looked like some of the sheiks he had seen in the movies. A little perfume took the smell of the barn away, and on Saturdays and Sundays he'd get all dressed up. Nobody had much over him then; he certainly was a lot better-looking than Mr. Harlan. It was sure nice to have a mirror. When he was undressed he would look at himself in it and run his hands all over his body. It felt good, and his muscles were big and strong and good to look at. He'd think of Anne then, and of her holding his hand when she taught him to write. If only he had the nerve to go right in her room and grab her—but she'd probably get scared and yell. Then he'd be back at the Farm, with some one watching him all the time. He didn't need her, anyway. . . .

Jim's hands were covered with calluses and his

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thumbs and forefingers were black and toughened with burns. He couldn't do it when Mrs. Harlan was around, but it was fun to light matches and hold them in its fingers until they burned out. It gave him a fine thrill when the fire cut into his flesh; it sent a fine shiver through him. At first there was a sharp, quick pain, right at the tips of the fingers holding the match, then a thrill ran up the arm and down the spine. Mrs. Harlan had told him he wouldn't get any supper any time she caught him doing it, so he hid the burned pieces of match in a crack in the floor under his bed. When they burned out he put them down the crack and they dropped out of sight.

There were times when Jim's head felt as though it would burst. It felt as though there was something inside hammering and pounding at his head, trying to get out. He had to shout then, and it didn't much matter what he shouted about. The best thing to do, if he didn't want to go back to the Farm, was to stay in his room when he felt like that. Once when he felt like that he went downstairs yelling, shouting names at Mrs. Harlan. He sort of went crazy then, and didn't know what he was doing, but luckily Mrs. Harlan hadn't been afraid of him. When a person wasn't afraid of him he didn't dare attack him. Mrs. Harlan hadn't been scared of him—she never was. She had stood calmly and told him to go back to his room. If she had been afraid he would have beaten her and run away. But she had told him he'd go back to the Farm if he didn't quit, and over the humming in his head that had had effect. The Farm wasn't so bad, but this was much better. There was a mirror, and a room of his own, and he could put perfume on himself whenever he felt like it. It was nice of Mrs. Harlan to give him the perfume. She gave it to him after he had used some of hers. His smelled stronger, and it came in a very

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fancy bottle, so it must be better than hers. She kept him supplied with it, and he thought that was pretty nice. At the Farm there was always somebody watching you—you could never get to do the things you couldn't do in front of people. As he thought of it, his fear of the Farm increased. A threat to return him there was enough to make him behave. Jim was always fairly happy, wherever he was, but he was happier with the Harlans than he had ever been before. Now there was no use to run away, he could see that. If he ran away he wouldn't have a warm clean bed to sleep in, and he wouldn't have food without working even harder than he did here for it. The first times he hadn't thought of that, but now he could see there was no use in running away. He was free here, freer than he had ever been. There were times when he had to do things he didn't like to do, but on the whole he was happy. He would run away, though, if they threatened him with the Farm.

Jim walked around the yard, out by the woodpile, whistling a little piece of tune over and over again. He had milked the cow, gathered the eggs, fed the cow and chickens, and now there was a little time with nothing to do before supper. Trixie, a big yellow mongrel, still a pup, romped about Jim, jumping up on him and getting his clothes all dirty. Jim swatted him a couple of times, but Trixie thought he was playing and went on jumping around him. Jim caught him a hard kick with his toe, from underneath, just as Trixie was jumping up. For a moment the dog was paralyzed. He yelped with pain, and his legs crumpled under him. Then life came back to his legs and he fled the terrible pain at the core of him, whimpering pitifully as he ran. Jim roared aloud and clapped his hands together, bending and unbending over them and laughing fit to burst. Oh! what a scream! He knew how it felt to be kicked

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there, but it sure was funny to see Trixie tearing down the lawn and yelping that way. Jim picked up a stone and threw it at Trixie. It caught him square on the tail. The dog howled and Jim echoed him with a shout of glee. Nobody was around to see him; they were all in the house.

Jim walked slowly back to the barn, smiling and occasionally chuckling to himself. Inside the barn it was pretty dark, and it took Jim awhile to get accustomed to the light. He sat down on a box between the stalls and the haymow, in a space which served as garage for the Ford, his hands clasped between his knees, still chuckling. He reached in his pocket and brought out a pack of Bull Durham and some papers. He rolled a cigarette and hung it between his thick lips. The match lit up an unaccustomed gleam in Jim's eyes. It was pretty, the fire of the match. Jim felt a familiar fever coming over him. He felt the match until it burned down and the current of it ran through his body. When the sensation had gone he was weak and shaking, his nerves on edge. His teeth came together with a sharp click that shook his head. He lit another match, holding it in the other hand. When it was burned he still felt unfulfilled, frustrated. A cold sweat had broken out on his forehead; he was chilly in the sticky warmth of the hay-scented barn. A few rays of the setting sun came in through a crack in the old barn, lighting on a pile of greasy rags lying in a corner beside a tin of grease and two tires. The sunlight on the pile of rags was not enough; Jim knew a way to make it blaze more splendidly. He would make a little fire with the pile of rags, just a little fire that wouldn't do any harm. It would be pretty, and he wouldn't let it get out of control. He dragged them out a little from the overhanging hay. There was quite a pile of them.

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The oily rags responded instantly to the flame of the match. In a second the whole pile was blazing, throwing up beautiful red and yellow and orange flames and curls of black smoke. Jim stepped back a little, gazing at the fire in fascination. It was so beautiful, so thrillingly beautiful that he could not take his eyes from it. The fire spread to the rags carelessly scattered between the big burning pile and the haymow. A wisp of hay caught the flame and carried it soaring and sizzling straight up the steep side of the haymow. Jim stared in dazed horror and fascination, like a child watching pyrotechnics. Never had anything been so beautiful and horrifying; the house in Pittsfield had not been one half so thrilling to watch. The barn was a roaring red hell before Jim gave a thought to his personal safety. He ran out of the partly opened rolling door and stood a distance away from the building, his eyes stuck to the livid red slit in the side of it. The bellowing of the cow was like a dash of cold water to Jim's senses.

He drew his breath in sharply, wheeled around and started running in terror for the house, shouting terrifically as he went, "Fire! FIRE! "

When Jim, running toward the house, saw George Harlan running toward him, he stopped short and dead.

The Farm! he thought, they'll take me back to the Farm! His mind had never worked so quickly; never had he made so quick a decision. Before George Harlan was ten steps nearer, Jim was running back to the barn, back to the fire, away from George and the Farm. The sight of the blazing barn, as he came out from behind the woodpile which shut it from view, stopped George, sent him running back to the house with Jim's cry in his mouth. He cried it into the telephone, to the whole house.

When George came out again, Mrs. Harlan and

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Anne and young George scattering round him, the top of the barn was blazing. Neighbours were running towards it, some with buckets in hand. The bellowing of the cow was torture to heighten the horror of the blazing barn.

“ Jim’s in there! ” cried George Harlan. “ I’ve got to go in and get Jim! ” Before he got to the barn the roof dropped in with a crash and a shower of molten wood; the whole structure was blazing. A couple of neighbours held George back. “ Stand back! ” they shouted. A huge section of the blazing front wall fell out, revealing a furnace of raging flame, its light as blinding as the sun’s.

By the time the fire engine arrived the barn was a blazing skeleton of rafters. The firemen hosed the house and the outhouses so that flying sparks would not catch them, and stayed to wet down the black smouldering heap that had been the barn.

J. BRONOWSKI

SPEECH ABROAD

*Alive that's stranger that the device
lived in the weather,
whose crest fell; and the deceived air
runnelled it, for a summer down
unbuoyant, that fell down. It had been splendid
heron trembling over
the kingfisher, or as brightness —
declining water's,
a westering bird's been
bellywhite in the flood-moon, waned Araris;
lost air. You lived with the air and then water
runs in the light, the silence
in which the blood was aimless, trembling,
no wing or wind shaken, must gush down; as hawk
strike speech against the stranger speech like land.
Unwholesome country of isles given to fester
a by night silent gentle most still river,
when voice is as light whose voice is
shadow of light, yet a leprous scaly sound under.
Was it at Malmaison,
heard by day the earth's speech, how is this city*

*(that was a heron flying over)
in its neckfeathers scragged away, and bewildered
flight of quails is
trivial, easy over; come as mothbirds
heart, dear heart, to the burning orange auspicious hill.*

*Alive that were, though it conquered,
from a deathly light out of Russia
now come over the Mississippi
arising in the spring with green
birch-brightness or virgin south's blue plague
and silver leprosy : that grow warm gauds of the earth
and gay spittled, rimmed bloody. For whom are not
the
rivers of Alaska? but are gathered together
the wheeling wheeling vulture omen.
Out of the quick of the air now with no fall of birds,
earth but not beaky death, but bird-clouds
to a grown fruitful city, by dropping,
and acrid richness. They came over oceans
hawked on wrists; from the misty part of the sea came.*

JOHN HAMPSON

THE HARLOT'S PROGRESS

In a top-storey bed-sitting room of a Paddington lodging-house, Clare Tapina sat considering the newly acquired points of her finger nails. They were very smart, quite vampy, she thought, moving her fingers to and fro. She felt excited and gay. She was preparing for her first visit to a night club. It was strange how things happened. It had been her name that did the trick. She smiled complacently in the mirror.

“Of course,” she had told her last night’s friend, “I don’t often go off with anybody who tries to pick me up. I’m a dancer, really, but I’ve not been in a show for nine weeks now. And I’ve got to get a bit of fun somewhere, haven’t I?” He had already given her thirty shillings in soiled paper money. So there was no risk in talking airily. It had been the right thing, too, for his waning interest revived. They talked stage affairs glibly.

In spite of all ambition, Clare had never appeared behind the footlights. Her sole achievement was a stage name. Still, her knowledge of stage people gained from gossip columns always convinced her clients that she was connected with the stage. Her new friend was no exception. After a while he said admiringly : “You ought to join Lou’s club. Crowds of pros go there. You might meet someone who could help you to get an engagement.”

Soon everything was arranged. He would propose her as a member. He would speak to Lou about her.

Lou was an old darling. All that Clare had to do was to turn up at the club, give her own name, and mention his, then she would be a member, too. Clare thanked him, and hoped gracefully that they would meet again. Possibly at Lou's. And that was that.

Clare had thought about the night club all day. It would be a good thing for her. She could take men there. They would be impressed. Old Lou sounded rather dangerous. Clare laughed. After all, she knew how to take care of herself. She would have to be careful about her imaginary stage experience. If anyone asked point-blank, she would tell them it had been on the Continent. Paris and Brussels, and a few of the larger provincial towns. They would swallow that. She was cute enough to convince any one. After all she could dance, and dance well. It would be nice to get in a show. She did not hope for that, really. It was too much to expect. If she could pick up clients of the right sort she would be quite satisfied. The stage could wait.

Dressed in her only evening frock, Clare set out for the club. She was pleased with her appearance, and excitement brought an effective wave of colour to her cheeks. She dare not imagine what the club would be like, but she hoped sensibly that it would not be too smart. She was not ready for a smart place yet, but a few nights' experience would teach her all the tricks needed. The smart clubs would come later. It would be a lucky sign if she picked up a nice friend during the first night at Lou's. Say a five-pound touch.

She found the place with ease. Over a blinded shop window in a Soho street was painted in white letters the name Lou. It might have been a modiste's or a corsetière's, or anything. She walked into the entrance hall and looked round. Lou was not the only tenant. Many other names were painted on neat wooden boards like large visiting cards. On a door to her left was written again Lou. Underneath the name was a bell push.

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Clare looked at her face in a small mirror. She tidied her hair swiftly, then rang the bell.

The door opened. A fat woman in a jersey suit smiled at her enquiringly. Clare gave her name. The fat woman's smile became benevolent. "Come right in, dear. We're all friends here. I'm Aileen." Clare walked into a smallish room and looked round. The furniture was plentiful, and enamelled bright green. Clare knew it was cheap. The room and the furniture had been decorated by unskilled if eager hands. "I'm an Irishomerican," Aileen said. "Will you sign the register, dear?" Clare did so, biting her underlip. "That will be five shillings, dear. Five shillings a quarter, dear, which is not much to pay for the advantage of getting a drink at any hour of the day or night, is it, dear?" Clare said nothing, but smiled. "First door on your right, dear, is the bar," Aileen said, leaving her.

Clare sat down on a wicker work couch. She felt quite at ease. The club was not smart. It would have pleased her to find it smarter than it was. She became aware of an unceasing chatter from the bar. Two fat women came out from it towards her. She stared at them boldly, thinking: "Cows." That's what they were, and she did not need any one to tell her so. Both women smiled hardly. "I'm Lou," said the tallest one. "Glad to make you welcome at my funny little club." Clare smiled back. "This is Tina," Lou said, pulling her companion forward. "She plays my piano and sings hot songs better than most." Clare smiled again. Tina nodded, then walked to the piano. She sat down, commencing to strum. Her hair was cut very short and the back of her thick, masculine neck was shaved. Lou smiled too, then walked back to the bar.

It was early yet. Clare sat awkwardly, smoking a cigarette, an illustrated paper open on her lap. She turned the pages slowly, pretending to read. Her mind spun quickly from thought to thought. She felt shy and

uncomfortable now. It was not much of place, anyway. What was the correct thing to do? Should she sit still or go into the bar? She would finish her cigarette first, and then decide.

"What does that bitch think this place is?" Lou demanded, whispering to the barmaid. "Go and ask her if she wants a drink, and bring the register back with you." Aileen nodded and went in past Tina. "Want a drink, dear?" she called. Clare looked up swiftly. "I'll finish my cig. and come over for one," she said quickly.

The two women looked at the register. "Looks foreign to me," Aileen muttered. Lou smiled. "Don't be green, kid. She has knocked the α off her first name to fasten it behind her second, that's how." Aileen sighed with admiration. The electric bell rang sharply. Carrying the book with her Aileen went to the door.

Clare got up and walked into the bar. It was small and furnished with a counter and high stools. There were four men there, and an elderly consumptive-looking blond who was whispering secrets to Lou. Every one gave Clare a faint smile. She responded, choosing a stool.

Aileen came in. "What's your poison, dear?" Clare looked along the shelves, considering. "Whisky, plain," she ordered. "Whisky," echoed the barmaid. "Whisky's heating. You take my tip. Have a beer." Clare refused haughtily. Fancy suggesting beer. They must be a common lot. Served with the drink she sat forward, added a little water, and took a delicate sip. The whisky was tepid. She gave a disgusted shudder.

The door bell rang again. In less than ten minutes the tiny room was full of people. Clare disliked the look of them all. They were a cheap crowd. She carried the remains of her drink back to the first room. Tina still sat at the piano. Other people came into the room and commenced to dance. Soon the floor held several swaying couples, and one man who danced alone. His

buttocks jerked as he shook his shoulders. Clare watched with disgust. She knew what he was. Fancy allowing any one like him in. Tina played furiously, singing the choruses of her songs in a husky voice. She introduced guttural explosive noises. She was horrible, like an excited ape. "Um da da! Um da da!" The crowd grew more noisy. They formed a ring round the solitary dancer, clapping sharp hands and beating the floor with stiffened feet. Tina's voice roared :

*"Happy feet, he's got those happy feet,
"Do do do dodoo do do do dodoo."*

The man danced with frenzy. He shook and shivered. Clare gazed with disgusted fascination.

A young man came and sat by her. "Isn't Martie clever?" he asked. "Of course his mother was a coloured woman." Clare nodded with a faint smile. When Martie's performance finished, they danced together. He asked, "What are you doing when you leave here?"

"Nothing."

"May I come with you and help?"

"It wouldn't be nothing we'd do, would it?" Clare inquired archly, her brain worked furiously. "Well, I hope not, you are a darling," the man's voice thickened. "May I come, then?" The girl smiled. She was uncertain of how to proceed. "May I come then?" he repeated tenderly. Clare had no intention of giving her favours. Men were all the same. She would not give any one of them anything for nothing. She made her voice light. "How much will you give me, eh?" The man's manner stiffened. He looked at her through narrowed eyes, then said: "I've never given a woman money yet, and I'm not going to begin now." Clare laughed shrilly. It was funny. Already his body had ceased to embrace hers, and his hold had become delicate. They circled the room twice more, then the piano stopped. Clare went back to her couch alone. She took a tiny sip

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of whisky, then searched with hostile eyes for her late partner. Soon she saw him, talking eagerly to Lou and the puff-ball. She could guess what he was saying.

Tina started to thump the piano again. The floor was crowded at once. Clare stared at the dance scornfully. She finished her whisky. It was no use waiting any longer. A whole night wasted. "Oh, hell," she whispered, half aloud. "To think I paid five bob to get in here."

She edged quickly towards the door, and, passing out, slammed it loudly behind her.

ELIZABETH HOUGHTON

NOON IN THE ASYLUM

It is noon in the big insane asylum de luxe on the hill. Out on the porch of Worthington House, Miss Dietz, the head nurse, is telling the a.m. nurses they can go to luncheon.

Miss Aird and Miss Fox and Miss Horrigan's special put on their short navy capes lined with light blue, shake out their key-rings and prepare to depart. Since it is raining, they will go via the "subway" instead of crossing the athletic field to the Nurses' Home.

Miss Dietz, alone in charge, begins to pick up the puzzle.

"No, Mrs. Kurt, you can't do the puzzle any more this morning. Give me that piece, that's it. Now the one you are hiding in your lap."

After a short struggle Mrs. Kurt relinquishes the piece and sinks back against the cushions of the wicker divan drawn up to the card-table. Her feet, in little-girl slippers with buttons and straps, stretch out in front of her. Her head with its brown curls tied up in a ribbon droops forward so that you cannot see her brown eyes. Neither can you see, at first, the leather band that passes round her waist under the folds of the gay gingham dress and buckles through the wicker work of the divan. In her hand lies a wilted flower.

Miss Dietz takes up her watch by the door. Time

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reckoned in hours, minutes, seconds, exists here only in her mind, which never stops ticking. Miss Dietz is reading a new novel by Warwick Deeping. She finds it hard to follow the sense. For at the same time she is keeping an eye on eight patients and listening for the rumble of the food trolleys. The subway for conveying undressed and unruly patients from one ward to another out of sight is also used for bringing the meals to the various houses. Large carriers with tubs of meat and vegetables, and salads with rich, nourishing dressing, travel on rails over the cement floor from the main kitchen. Miss Dietz is very hungry. Presently will come the welcome signal : the sound of some one unlocking the serving pantry will tell her that the p.m. nurses are there setting up the trays. Then Miss Dietz herself can go to luncheon.

Her stomach gurgles. No one speaks.

Suddenly a figure seated on the edge of a rocking-chair in the corner, its hands hanging stiffly at its sides, its head bent, stoops as though to pick up something from the floor.

A voice breaks the mid-day stillness.

“ Miss Dietz, this little piece of dust is Edward Titcomb himself. He was almost thrown down the toilet this morning. Won’t you please rescue him ? ”

A drift of warm, rain-scented air floats through the sun-porch. Sweet—so sweet the spring air.

“ Now Miss Dudley, you know that’s nonsense.”

The voice continues more urgently.

“ And Miss Dietz, they’ve cut off Katharine Titcomb’s hands and feet and left her soaking in her own blood in the bathtub.”

“ Miss Dudley, be quiet. Do you want another egg-nog ? ”

“ Oh, no Miss Dietz, I don’t want another egg-nog. But they’ve taken John Littlefield’s clothes away from him, and left him on a roof, bound to a

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chimney. Oh, yes they have. He'll freeze to death if you don't rescue him, Miss Dietz."

The grey head is raised in supplication. Hair laid in a bang across the forehead, Dutch cut neatly trimmed behind, straight grizzled locks that are carefully oiled and brushed every morning, accentuate the strong perfect shape of the head. The eyes, deep set, and of a luminous blue, are not lighted by any transforming meaning from within. They are blank. An old grey coat slips from one shoulder as the sticks of arms hang.

"Sit up, Miss Dudley. Sit back in your chair. Come now."

Miss Dietz rises, rearranges the patient's clothes, pushes her against the back of the chair, and goes again to her place by the door.

The sound of a page turned.

It is very still.

Far out on the road three figures pass, walking close together. The two outside figures securely grasp the arms of the middle figure just above the elbow. This is Mrs. Hormsby, being taken to her cottage from the exercise circle. The three figures move briskly with a certain military precision. On past the darkened chapel, down the hill, past Belknap House, and out of sight in front of the Administration Building, the marching feet say : "Carry on! Carry on! "

No one ever goes out of Worthington House.

Rain slips softly from the eaves. The stems of the rose-bushes on the lawn are turning from winter red to green. Soon the new little leaves will begin to unfold.

"Miss Dietz, they have put Laura Knowlton into a bureau drawer. They have diminished her until she is no bigger than a rag doll. She is smothering in there. *Please* take her out."

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“Miss Dudley, there is an egg-nog with two eggs in it right in the ice-chest. If you won’t be quiet you will have to drink it now, just before your luncheon. Must I go and get it?”

“Oh, no Miss Dietz, I don’t want any egg-nog.”

A pause. Miss Dudley moves slightly, uneasily, in her chair, then clutching the window-sill, begins to raise herself slowly and painfully to her feet. Like long black triangles of shiny wood are Miss Dudley’s feet. She wears oxfords without any lacing in them. Sliding along, not bending her ankles, she tries to walk.

“Miss Dudley, where are you going? Sit down at once.”

The head nurse almost screams at her.

Miss Dudley’s face turns red. Her chin pierced by tiny hairs, like a round pin-cushion full of pins, moves up and down quivering. A great sob escapes her throat.

“I think—I’m almost sure—I’m afraid I’ve wet my drawers, Miss Dietz. I don’t want to give any trouble, Miss Dietz, but I should like to change my drawers.”

“Well, there’s no one here now to take you into the house, Miss Dudley. You sit right down until some one comes.”

The tall angular body collapses into the rocking-chair, head bent once more.

Eight patients neither move nor speak....

After a long time a key rattles in the lock. Steps slur over the thick carpet in the hall.

From below and a long way off rises a strange unreasonable murmur. It grows until it seems to fill all space. Mrs. Kurt looks up in terror. Out upon the sun porch rolls the sound, a metal tide wave with a threat in it.

The door to the porch clicks.

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Miss Kaltenbacher, freshly starched and rested from her two hours off, stands on the threshold. She has taken a bath, written to her mother, made a necktie for her boy friend in the automobile business, and washed all her stockings, since ten o'clock. Now she has come to special Miss Horrigan for the rest of the day.

“The trays are here, Miss Dietz.”

The head nurse closes her book with a snap.

“Some one to help with Miss Dudley please, and see that Mrs. Kurt’s orange juice is not left off the tray.”

The relief holds aside her stiffly protruding skirts to let Miss Dietz pass through to the dining-room.

“Well, and how are we to-day?” she chirrups, smiling brightly at the eight immobile figures in the sun porch.

FORREST ANDERSON

A ROOM FOR THE NIGHT

the room is richly barren.

outside, the scene seems pasted on the window-pane.

the bed resembles a tired woman.

we ran the corridors, derelicts looking for angels.

romanticism does this to us.

damn romanticism.

mirrors make it not a room.

the waste-basket broods.

the fireplace is pregnant.

everything is wrapped in expectancy.

*should the building fall apart, each plank would be
wrapped in expectancy and realization, both
burning, bitterly burning.*

after the bolt is shot, we hear scratchings at the door,

we hear

the pressure against it, we hear the finger-prints.

*false wood-graining makes transparent the walls, so
sets of clothing hanging tacitly. that we see*

turn on the electric light and the rain will stop. silver

ledges

*of the rain. if the sight of water assuage you, flush
the toilet.*

FORREST ANDERSON

*i could think of betrayals : how i who have harmed
you walk in
peace at your side; of a sailor who died because
he denied a sailor.*

i died before i die, wishing thus to escape monotony.

but i

shall not think of him, lest the rain stop, lest the bolt melt,
lest romance become a classic, lest finger-prints resound in other rooms.

lest we drain the great blue mirror on which we lie
swimming.

TEST

*when sight of you does wound my sight
with an attraction hardly given
and i find i have loved again
against advisement from a former plight
knowing you unlike me, or if
at all it is in kindness and in haste
to give and equally return the gift
toward a more active a less knowing place
diplomacy tires, philosophy deserts
while i could beseech incompetent fate
—bring me all trials in one trial
—try on this love the many loves
that once their worth once might prove
nothing in love below, something in death above*

GUY FANGEL

THE FRIEND IN NEED

“God Almighty!” I growled, “I’ve got to have money—a bunch of it. This has ceased to be a joke. And, by thunder! I’m going to get hold of some money to-night if I have to murder somebody for it!”

We were leaning against the zinc bar of the *Café de la Horde*, sipping black coffee in glasses. Frater shrugged his shoulders sceptically.

“Oh, you say that,” he muttered.

“You think I haven’t the nerve. Well, you’ll see. I’m sick of sleeping under bridges and living on *café-crèmes*. Think of what I was once! Hell, life owes me better than this, and I’m going out to get it.”

Frater smiled. “Going to draw a little cheque on life, so to speak, eh? Well, take my word, it’ll come back marked ‘No funds’.”

“Oh, I should prefer to work if they’d give me the chance, but since they won’t... on their heads be it. When I leave you in a few minutes I’m going to take the first chance that comes along... and if it leads me into crime, so much the worse. No more weakness. No more scruples. I’m going to get money or my name isn’t what it is.”

“Yeah,” drawled Frater; “but how?”

I considered the rows of alluring bottles on the high shelves.

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"Life," I said smiling, "is full of possibilities."

"Sure," returned Frater ironically, "excellent possibilities for landing in jail."

That, I reflected, might be just my luck. But if it was, it wouldn't be any worse than my present situation. I was about to say as much when I saw a face peering into the bar-room from the doorway of the café proper. I recognized Marjorie Dascom. She had a rather distraught eye as her head inquiringly bobbed about to see if any one she knew was at the zinc. If she saw me she gave no sign; our acquaintance, it is true, was then slight. On seeing her, however, I had an inspiration: the plan I'd been hoping for was born full-fledged. It was a plan that promised to be fairly easy to carry out.

Financially Marjorie was well fixed. She received generous alimony, so they said, from an ex-husband in America. Useless for me to try to touch her, however, for in such a case she always handed out ten francs at once so that with that one had to be satisfied. I needed a lot more than ten francs and there was only one way of getting it from her. I saw the job clearly. I had only to get into her studio on some pretext and there take her by the throat and threaten to strangle her unless she handed over all she had. Only a bluff, of course. The thing was to scare her sufficiently. And she'd make no trouble afterwards. She hated publicity, I happened to know.

Frater talked on, but I scarcely heard him. I was turning over schemes for getting into Marjorie's studio. The getting in was the only difficulty, as I saw the business. She had not stayed. So, in a few minutes, I left Frater to search for her. I found her in a far corner of the café proper. She was sitting alone. I pretended to have just happened on her.

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“Oh, hello, Miss Dascom! ”

She returned my greeting without interest. Her eye was still rather distraught.

I leaned across the table to say jocularly, “Would you buy me a drink? ”

“Yes,” she said, “sit down.”

I sat down at once.

“I’m in luck to find you,” I continued. “I was hoping I’d happen on some public benefactor.” This, however, led to nothing: apparently she was in no mood for levity. The waiter came and she asked me what I’d have.

“If you’ll stake me to a Pernod,” I muttered.

“*Un Pernod fils pour monsieur,*” she ordered.

In my attempt to make conversation she gave me no help. I gazed at the rows of fanciful paintings covering the walls, at the prostitutes here and there, at some Germans at the next table. None of them suggested anything. Finally I offered some general remark about life. That took.

“Life! ” she at once mocked, savagely. Then turning away, her lip curled, she added: “But I suppose you like it.”

“Don’t you? ” I asked, struggling to retain the facetious note.

“A beastly blundering mess! ” she retorted. “A devastating dream! ” After a moment she went on, “And as for you men with your everlasting sex obsession. . . .”

“Ah! ” I said, “some Don Juan been trying to play up to you? ”

But she ignored the remark. Once more we fell into silence.

I wondered what could be the matter with her. Obviously she was upset about something. What was it? I waited, feeling a little uncomfortable.

Presently she tried to pull herself together and

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talk. We got on a little better. Soon we were exchanging incidents out of our pasts.

About hers I knew vaguely. I knew that after her divorce she had had a tremendous affair with a Captain Franchard, a famous explorer and big game hunter. She had shot lions with him in Africa. The papers had given pictures of them together. But the affair had ended. Since then she had lived in Montparnasse, her ambition oscillating between a desire to paint and a desire to drink herself to death. It was generally supposed that she was still hopelessly in love with Franchard. As we talked, I was still wondering for some good excuse to get into her studio. That was beginning to worry me. She'd be going home soon, and when she did I must be ready to act.

"Let's go over to the Domino," she suddenly remarked. "I'm bored with this place."

"As you like," I said.

She paid and we wandered across the street.

The Domino, before they modernized it, had a comfortable musty atmosphere that was congenial to idleness and night-owling. When we were seated on the shabby leather seats she again asked me what I'd have.

"I'll stick to Pernod," I answered. She switched to *finø à l'eau*.

"What's your studio like?" I now asked her.

"Oh, quite a big place, with a room off."

"Expensive?"

"Twelve thousand."

"H'm," I mused, "real money!" After a pause I added, "I'd like to see it sometime."

Before she could reply some friends of hers came along and sat down with us. One was a conceited Englishman with a pink, pointed beard; the other, his American mistress on whose money they lived.

I resented their intrusion, fearing that it would interfere with the execution of my plan. The absinthe was warming me up, and I felt a marvellous serenity, felt myself equal to anything. Yet I hoped whatever it was would not be too long delayed. I gave little attention to the talk, the problem of getting into Marjorie's place still preoccupying me. I reflected that after all it might be simple. If she'd let me accompany her to her door, I had only to give her time to get upstairs, then follow her up, knock, and when she opened the door, push past her and say I wanted to talk to her.

I kept wishing the others would go, but evidently they were in no hurry. It was nearly two when at last they went. I had supposed their going would probably be the signal for our own departure, but Marjorie gave no sign of packing up. So I asked her how late she intended to stay.

"I don't want to go home," she said. "Let's make a night of it."

I felt baffled. Was some instinct making her delay? Was she going to slip through my fingers?

"Have another Pernod," she said. It sounded to me as if it were to placate me.

I thought I had had enough but I accepted, intending merely to sip. She was growing more cheerful and quite talkative. The brandy, I thought. For an hour or so we chatted volubly. The Domino assumed its all-night atmosphere. The crowd had thinned out to a bare two dozen—Russians, Germans, Swedes, Americans: callow art students, intellectual wild men, lurching idlers, paranoiacs, la-de-das, Lesbians, guzzlers. With a group in one corner was a Boston girl I'd heard singing coon songs in Freddy's. She had the dialect pat, but overdid it in conversation. "Yo's crazy in de haid, chile!" I now heard her shouting.

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In talking of her past, Marjorie had not alluded to Captain Franchard. I thought I might draw her out.

"You used to know Captain Franchard, didn't you?" I remarked casually.

She shot me a glance that seemed to me inexplicably quite terrified. Then, looking away, she said in a low tone, "Yes, but don't talk about it."

"Sorry," I said, suspecting that I'd reopened some forgotten wound.

"Nobody knows de trouble Ah've seen," crooned the Boston girl. "Nobody knows but Jesus."

I couldn't make it out. Marjorie looked towards the singer with a kind of wistfulness. Her talk was growing incoherent. Her mood went from silliness to depression and back again. Once again I was far from being at ease. I hoped she wouldn't get too drunk. Women are impossible then. So, when she was about to order another *fine à l'eau*, I quietly suggested that she should lay off.

She stared at me.

"You don't want to get tight," I said.

"Who the hell told you?" she retorted, and the drink came. Then, in an undertone, she said: "God, what have I got to keep sober about?"

Perhaps, after all, I reflected, her being tight might make my job easier. That would be the excuse for seeing her upstairs and into her place. I must be careful, however, not to follow her example. I should need a clear head to do the thing right. How much money had she in her studio, I wondered. One night, when I had been with her group and there had been talk of the bank failures in America, she had said, "I don't trust my money in any bank. I keep it in a stocking." She might have been only joking but if it were true—Gee!

A drunk came from the bar, an amiable, well-

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dressed drunk with a foolish smile. He was looking for some one to fraternize with. His comic red moustache stood out like the wisps of a worn-out broom. After taking the whole roomful in, he came to our table and beamed gleefully.

“I’m an author!” he announced solemnly. Marjorie looked away. I looked indifferent. “I’m an author!” he repeated, rocking unsteadily. I smiled, for he was a comic sight. Encouraged, he went on, “My name is MacPherson, but you may call me Sandy.” He drew a new packet of cigarettes from his pocket and tore off the end. “Here,” he said, “have a cigarette.” So abrupt was his gesture that the entire contents of the packet showered upon the table. “Help yourselves,” he said, and dropped into a chair facing us.

Meanwhile a young woman, obviously French, had followed him in and was watching him. Seeing him sit down with us, she placed herself at a table beside us, and with her head resting on her hand, continued to eye him placidly.

“MacPherson,” continued the drunk, “O. F. MacPherson. Have you never heard of me?”

I admitted it.

“Lord, man, where have ye been? I write the best books of any man in Scotland.”

“Hoots mon!” I muttered.

“And I have great fun writing them. I invent the most blood-curdling murders, the most hair-raising situations . . .”

“Don’t talk about them!” Marjorie suddenly cried. “I don’t want to hear about them!”

The drunk looked astonished, then turned to me. “But I do,” he said. “I have a glorious time writing them and I get paid for it besides. Fancy, getting paid for enjoying oneself. I call that rather a good joke, don’t you?”

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“A good Scotch joke,” I agreed.

He looked at me whimsically. Then he pointed his finger at Marjorie and solemnly said, “I’ve seen you before!”

“Mind your own business,” she murmured.

“At Fouquet’s one night... with that explorer chap—I forgot his name. Am I not right?”

Marjorie said nothing.

“Am I not right?” he repeated loudly.

“Yes, yes, yes, you’re right” she said quickly.

He smiled at me victoriously. “I never forget a face.”

After that neither of us encouraged him. At last another drunk from the bar came and persuaded him to return there. In following, the French girl picked up the forgotten cigarettes scattered over our table and put them in her hand-bag.

Marjorie and I leaned back and relaxed. What with the drinks and lateness of the hour we were both, I think, becoming drowsy. It was getting on towards four. Once I asked her if she didn’t feel like going home, but she shook her head emphatically. The Boston girl was still with her friends over in the corner, and now and again her voice would rise in a melancholy wail with that haunting refrain, “Nobody knows de trouble Ah’ve seen....”

Altogether I was having slow going. Yet I was surprised to see, when they came, the first pink touches of the dawn through the windows.

“It’s getting light,” I said.

Marjorie started. “I suppose we might as well have some coffee and go home,” she said.

At last! I thought.

So, after the coffee, we were in the street on the way to her studio in the Rue Campagne-Première. She took my escorting her for granted. I was still

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as resolute as ever about carrying out my plan. We said nothing.

Marjorie lurched once or twice. I gripped her arm. She rather leaned against me. Occasionally a shudder would pass through her, and I saw even a slight twitching of the muscles of her face.

How would she behave, I wondered, when we came to the scratch? Would she put up a fight? Try to scream? I must stop that at all costs. No, damn it! I'd stand no nonsense. I imagined my fingers on her throat.... I hoped, however, she'd make the business easy.

At her door, after she had rung the bell, I went through the formality of taking leave. I held out my hand, saying, "Well, it's been a pleasant night...."

But: "Come up with me a moment, will you?" she said, looking at me so that I knew she meant it.

What luck! I thought, and of course I followed her upstairs.

We entered a small hallway. To the left of this was a partly drawn portière, which permitted a glimpse of the studio with its big skylight. Then she laid a hand on my arm and I noticed that she was trembling.

"You go in first," she murmured.

I was surprised. But I marched in, and then she followed.

The room, in the cold misty light, had an air of comfort, almost of luxury. A large easel stood in the centre with canvases grouped about it as a mother might be surrounded by her babes. There were Louis XV chairs, an Empire desk, and a deep divan with a mass of cushions.

Then, passing the easel, I caught my breath. There before me, on the floor, was the body of a man, a

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fine-looking man, with a face even in death proud and arrogant.

I turned to Marjorie. "Who is it? What does it mean?"

Her voice quavered. "It's... Captain Franchard," she murmured. "I... shot him... last night." There was no doubt about the way she trembled. She looked at me blankly. I looked back.

"Good God! Tell me how it happened."

My sympathy went out to her and I took her hands.

When at last she could speak, she said :

"He came here to... to ask me to go back to him. I refused. After a while he got angry... and we quarrelled. Then, suddenly, I saw his jaw set in a way it had and he came towards me. I knew what that look meant. I'd seen it in Africa when he had tortured the natives. He had powerful wrists and I've seen the natives writhe and howl in agony. I was frightened. I ran over to that table where I kept my revolver. I only wanted to keep him at a distance. I knew a gun was the only thing he was afraid of. But the damned thing went off in my hand."

"An accident, of course."

"Through the heart," she murmured, "He seemed to die at once." And as we stared at the corpse she added, "What a mess!"

"Don't worry," I said, "It'll come out all right."

"I couldn't stay here last night," she went on.

"No."

"It was nice of you to sit up with me. And now, if you'll remain here while I get a few things together, I'll go to the police and give myself up."

"I'll go there with you," I rejoined, "and if there's anything I can do, you can count on me."

She turned to go. Half-way to the door she

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stopped, hesitated, and then said, "By the way, why don't you take what's in his wallet? You might as well have it. It's no good to him. Only, leave a little, so they won't think I robbed him."

The idea of robbing the dead was gruesome and yet... wasn't I supposed to be ready for anything? This was after all nothing in comparison with what I might have had to do. Besides, if I didn't help myself to the money, the police probably would, I thought.

I cautiously lifted the coat and took out the wallet. In one of its compartments I found four neatly folded thousand franc notes; in another, seven hundred franc ones. I left three of the latter and returned the wallet to its place.

I stood for a moment. Then, "Thanks, old chap," I said quietly.

And I followed after Marjorie.

R. L. MÉGROZ

POETS ARE NOW THE BEST NOVELISTS

We are still reluctant to take with open seriousness the work of young artists, though that reluctance is nowadays accompanied by ill-considered hallelujahs over smartly-dressed corpses which pose as vitally original new books. These hallelujahs must not be confused with the critical appreciation of young writers. It is a mere convenience for book societies and the gentlemen who parade their egotism in popular newspapers to find at least one new genius a month. By a freak of inverted snobbery the same gentlemen will freely display their broad-mindedness by wasting valuable space on rubbish of the Edgar Wallace (God rest him!) variety and sneering at the very mention of "literature." Any attempt to distinguish between permanent values and temporary journalism is supposed to be a sign of narrow-mindedness or priggishness. Those unprincipled herald angels are saved from the condemnation that all traitors deserve by the forgetfulness of the public, which overlooks the proportion of the books that have been boosted in the press and forgotten for ever before the next publishing season.

Let us not forget that continually misdirected praise is necessarily accompanied by an equal amount of misdirected disapproval or sheer neglect. So far at least as the general public is concerned, apprecia-

tion of creative work lags far behind the time of its appearance. Old age is accepted as the hall-mark of genius and authority. This intensified worship of age is partly accountable no doubt to the ravages of the war. The Bernard Shaws and Barries, who had their own early periods of discouragement, acquire a factitious importance by the mere persistence of their figures on the sky-line, and not by further development.

The unlovely expressions of our modernity, which interest only a small section of the reading public, may be intensified by this vicious condition of inertia which opposes new work. Jack Lindsay's *London Aphrodite*, which ran for six numbers during 1928 and 1929, was intended as a banner of revolt, and it must be said that in spite of the fundamental sanity of the editor, much of the contents might be cited in support of the present argument that extremism is as bad for art at one end of the scale as it is at the other. But in one of his editorials Lindsay well said that "we are intently in movement; so much so, that an expression must be frankly experimental before it can be admitted to have achieved anything, and if every architechtionic device does not stick alarmingly into the air out of a minimum of digested material, the work is considered amorphous, reactionary, or romantic—unless of course it is genuinely amorphous under the pretence of psychological experiment."

Certainly there is a justified distrust of modernity. But this distrust only helps the distortion of taste towards an undue exaltation of the older and familiar figures. Thus at one end we get heart's ease confectionery; especially, too, sentimental pornography, the ablest suppliers of which are usually women, and "thrills" over inhuman crime surrounded by the most fantastic notions of human behaviour. At the

other end of the scale are the cocktails of perishable excitement and the gloom of mumbo-jumbo obscurity reminiscent of a witch-doctor's incantation. Somewhere between the murk of unshaped modern feelings which are but ancient lusts and the worship of the long-familiar—or the newly-made pastiche of it—burns the flame of new genius.

The true flame often evokes a "Hallelujah" simply because, if you back most of the runners in a race, you are likely to back the winner. The danger is that while our faked modernity is already being overtaken by disillusionment, the enduring standards of creative craftsmanship are being blurred by so many vain scribblings upon the palimpsest of public taste.

So soon as one glances over the new fiction of the past fifteen years, the name and work of D. H. Lawrence looms up, almost characterizing the period. Much more so, I think, than Joyce's great isolated effort in *Ulysses*, the influence of which is almost entirely in the domain of technique. But Lawrence embodied much of the feeling and attitude—one hesitates to say "thought"—of the post-war generation. He was not the originator of what one may call the Philosophy of the Belly. That attempt to find a new orientation of the self is partly very ancient and partly as new as modern psychology, but Lawrence fused the conflicting elements in the heat of his poetic vision. More, he somehow showed that the pursuit of ecstasy, the attempt to gain freedom by a willing assumption of sensual shackles until these could be transformed into wings, might accompany a passionate interest in the everyday life of the people enslaved to the industrial machine. In this sense, *Sons and Lovers* is a more comprehensive novel than the poetically conceived but realistic stories, such as

The Man Who Died and *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, in which are concentrated his symbolic interpretation of the desiring self of man. I have no doubt that if Lawrence had lived longer, he would slowly have brought the aspiring self of man into equal prominence. But he was still reacting fiercely against the false standards of a hypocritical moral idealism.

Several of our younger writers seem to have combined the study of society with a similar pursuit of ecstasy through sexual desire. None has done so more clearly perhaps than Rhys Davies, whose latest novel, *Count Your Blessings*, must be disappointing to the admirers of his admirable stories in *A Pig in a Poke*, *Arfon*, *A Bed of Feathers* and *A Woman*. It is a sign of his temporary exhaustion that the finely written story, *A Woman*, which was published in a limited edition some years ago, serves as the opening of *Count Your Blessings*? Certainly it is the best part of the novel.

Liam O'Flaherty has attempted something similar in the novel, but I do not think we shall forgive him just yet for his exploitation of mere violence in the vein of *The Return of the Brute*. There have been too many novels described as "strong" by the aforesaid herald angels of the press and book societies, and it is perhaps a grim satisfaction to find one of the boosted authors, Mr. A. J. Cronin, already speaking disrespectfully of the book with which he was made a "best seller"—*Hatter's Castle*. Even an artistic writer of the quality of L. A. G. Strong, after giving us *The Jealous Ghost*, has, I fear, been diverted slightly from the narrow path in his recent novel, *The Brothers*, a tale of the West Highlands which in some respects only a poet could have written, but which is not sufficiently convincing in its violent action, although the characterization of the primitive

fishermen is brilliant. It made me think of an Irish poet like F. R. Higgins trying to write a Hall Caine melodrama. And that is to some extent what has happened, because Mr. Strong is undeniably a fine lyric poet.

Something of the sort seems to have happened when Richard Hughes, a dramatist as well as a poet, wrote *A High Wind in Jamaica*. It seems that poets of the quality of Strong and Hughes do better in the short story. The best of Hughes's fiction is in the volume entitled *A Moment of Time*. The best of Strong's, except possibly *The Jealous Ghost*, which is a novel on the level of poetry, is in his volume *The English Captain and Other Stories*.

If one pursues this line of thought, a fairly reliable generalization about modern fiction emerges. The prose art of fiction has been greatly enriched in our time by poets. This is an under-statement. Nearly all the best fiction of our time has been and is being written by poets. The reason for this may be economic, or it may be that the contemporary atmosphere is uncongenial to ample expression in verse. But whatever reason is assigned to it, the phenomenon must be recognized.

Lawrence and Joyce were typical in this respect. If the older poets, like Chesterton and Masefield, wrote prose fiction, their work in prose did not imply their poetry, though it may have embodied their temperamental motives and vision of life. But only a few more names and titles will suffice out of a wider possible selection to dot the i's and cross the t's of this conclusion. Consider Walter de la Mare's *Memoirs of a Midget*, E. H. Visiak's *Medusa*, John Cowper Powys's *Wolf Solent*, Charles Williams's *The Place of the Lion*, Osbert Sitwell's *The Man Who Lost Himself*, Clemence Dane's *Legend*, and any volume

you like of A. E. Coppard's stories. Among the successful fiction writers of to-day who have also proved themselves in varying degrees to be genuine poets there are Richard Aldington, Thomas Moult, Louis Golding, Sylvia Townsend Warner, Victoria Sackville-West, Rose Macaulay, Sheila Kaye-Smith, Rupert Croft-Cooke, J. C. Squire, Edward Shanks, and Sacheverell Sitwell.

None of these has written a work of fiction so indubitably that of a poet writing at top pressure as those named just before them, but they are all important enough to support the present argument, and, further, one has only to realize that writers like Hardy, Kipling and Galsworthy, among the older generation, were exceptional in practising the two arts of poetry and fiction.

A consequence of this immensely increased participation by the poets in the production of fiction for the public must be to remove the long-standing slur cast upon prose fiction, that it is not a form of art at all, or at best a hybrid of art and journalistic reporting.

If now we turn round on this generalization to consider the most important development that lies outside it, we see, it seems to me, that if the poets are raising the artistic level of fiction, they are definitely conservative in technique. With the exception of Joyce, who is, after all, not important as a poet, their wealth of impressionism and intuition has been poured into modern fiction without straining the traditional vehicle for the story. It is true that that great writer, H. G. Wells, has played ducks and drakes with the story in his later novels, but giving the preacher too much rein can scarcely be regarded as a serious denial of a tradition which includes Samuel Richardson, Defoe and Dickens.

Moreover, it is arguable that the best of Wells's writing is in the novels and short stories which are not thus weakened by the intellectual argument which undoubtedly inspires them. *The Time Machine*, *The First Men in the Moon*, *The Food of the Gods*, *The War of the Worlds*, *Tono-Bungay*, *Kipps*, *Ann Veronica*, present arguments just as seriously and deliberately as the novels which suffer as stories through a superfluity of propaganda—books such as *The New Machiavelli*, *Joan and Peter*, *The Undying Fire*, *The Dream*, *The Autocracy of Mr. Parham*, and the Britling and Clissold records.

I would agree with Mr. J. D. Beresford, who is that *rara avis*, a successful novelist and a penetrating critic of the novel, in seeking for the most revolutionary departure from tradition in such experimenting as Miss Dorothy Richardson's. It is early yet to estimate the influence that her long record of Miriam Henderson's inner life may have upon other novelists, but with Mr. Beresford let us recognize that her psychological realism involves a change more radical than the work of either Joyce or Proust, who are supposed to be extreme realists.

“Neither of these writers,” says Mr. Beresford, “is inspired by the mystical quality that is peculiar to Miss Richardson. . . . We are constantly aware of the person of the recorder as opposed to that of the experimenter. Dorothy Richardson has assumed the existence of a soul to which the consciousness has much the same relation that the intelligence has to the consciousness. . . .”

In a beautiful essay which ought to be widely read, John Cowper Powys had given an elaborate exposition of the mystical significance in Miss Richardson's self-denying quest of reality. The essay is one of the notable pointers to Miss Richardson's probable

influence. In any case it is unlikely that without that influence Virginia Woolf's more poetic explorations in the novel of the mind of a central character would have so freely modified the traditional narrative manner, and Miss May Sinclair has avowed her own discipleship of the Miriam stories in *Mary Olivier*.

But May Sinclair has written a novel in very free verse, which seems to be the boldest kind of technical experiment since the war, for it is an attempt to bridge the gap between the novel and the narrative poem. It has not, however, had successors, and is unlikely to do so, mainly because the gap is being bridged in the way already indicated, by poets writing in good prose. Instead of writing an *Everlasting Mercy* or a *Reynard*, they write a *Wolf Solent*, a *Jealous Ghost*, a *Man Who Died*, a *Place of the Lion*, and I should like to add, a *Portrait in a Mirror*, but so far as we know Mr. Charles Morgan has employed a poetic mind entirely in prose fiction and has not written poetry itself.

With their exceptional command of literary resources, the poet-novelists of our day have frequently taken advantage of the new freedom of realism which replaces external action by introspective associations, but they have done so within the traditional requirements of narrative, maintaining the succession of incidents, the rise and fall of situations and the logical links which drama demands. Enthusiastic revolutionaries may lament this, but it is probable that the poets, by their intuitive devotion to the profound romantic bases of artistic form, have saved modern English fiction from disintegration during a period of unusually severe disturbance and reorientation.



Drawing by *Grigor Piralian*

OLIVER WARNER

THE KEY

Agnes Lowther kept a boarding-house. Hers is a maligned race. Those who keep boarding-houses are neither better nor worse than their fellows—merely more unfortunate in the moods of those with whom they come in contact. When English people of a certain type go on their annual holiday to the sea they become either insufferable or, if they have it in them, so released, so uninhibited as to be unrecognizable.

Agnes Lowther, whose livelihood lay with such people, usually saw them at their worst. By day she dwelt underground, in caverns of domesticity, and her uprisings had four principal causes. She rose to answer bells when the maid was occupied; to make complaints; to defend herself; and to demand payment. Her appearances were, therefore, sinister. Her consolations, on the other hand, were few. She did not drink; she was not religious; and she did not read. She merely supported life to the best of her ability, and hoped to be able to give up taking lodgers before she grew old.

The name of her boarding-house was “Elgin.” Why “Elgin”? Miss Lowther, if ever this subject were broached, would reply that “Elgin” was the name of the house when she bought it, and that it would remain “Elgin” until she left it. Anyway, it was as much to the point as “Sea View”, the next

house, which looked out, not on to the sea, but on to the village green.

South Bay, where she lived, was a pretty place in its way. It consisted of a pebble beach; a small harbour; Customs offices; a group of warehouses; two inns; a village green; a row of boarding-houses, and a cluster of bungalows. East and west along the coast rose high downs; south was the sea; north lay a road to a market town, Maypole, two miles inland. That was all there was to it.

In May, the place began to stir. In June, it came alive: the inns flourished, tradesmen came in twice a day from Maypole, and visitors began to bathe. In July, the population swelled heavily; in August, it became overcrowded; in September, it was nearly as full, while in October, the winter lifelessness began to take a grip upon it and this never relaxed until May came round again.

Winter was usually unspeakable. Even in summer South Bay could be a windy place, but in winter the gales would lash and lash the smooth pebbles day after day; slates would be ripped from their places on roofs, and clatter to the ground; often for a week on end windows in a given quarter had to be closed tight to prevent their being blown away. Skies would be drab with a drabness equal to that of any industrial city, rain would stream down, and only fools, and those who had to live there, would be found in South Bay alive or dead.

That was the point. Tom Lowther did not *have* to live there. His sister had. That was how they differed so implacably. Tom would have lived anywhere but in South Bay, gladly, while for his sister it meant sustenance, and she knew well enough how easily are connexions lost, how hardly gained.

Tom would have lived anywhere... on some one

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else. He was fifty-two, a portly figure with a large grey moustache and deep-set eyes which, as he stood in the doorway of "Elgin" on one of the quieter evenings, gazed westward and seemed to be seeing visions. More than one person, who did not know Tom Lowther, had remarked this dreamy appearance. But if they waited a little, they would see a watch pulled from a waistcoat pocket, a clearing of the throat, a spit, and then—if time were ripe—a solemn walk across the green. There was only one reason, Tom considered, for walking across the green, and regular times for doing it.

"Evenin', Tom," the landlord of the Labour in Vain would remark : "reg'lar clock you be."

"Aye," Tom would reply in his slow voice, "a clock that wants winding up."

He would then proceed to wind up until his cash was exhausted or until there remained not a soul in the bar who could be expected to offer him even a modest half-can.

The Labour in Vain swung a sign which caused amusement. In a wooden tub was a nigger boy, and over the tub stood two stout women, trying to scrub him white. Agnes Lowther, who, when she thought, thought to the point, sometimes mused on the peculiar appositeness of this sign to her brother's character. Nothing could make black white. Her brother... yes, she disliked him even more than he disliked her, which was saying much. It was ten years since he had done a stroke of work.

Ten years ago, the two of them had been left a few hundred pounds. Hers had been invested in "Elgin", his in gin, and when London had done with him he had come down, a squeezed fruit, to South Bay, where she was just beginning to make a living.

If she could have, she would have turned him out

without a second's thought, but there was no doubt that it meant the workhouse, and from his childhood Tom had had the easy faculty of minor blackmail. So long as she, Agnes Lowther, continued to give him the wherewithal for "modest drinking," as he called it, at the local inn, and decent bed and board, he—he let it be understood—would behave respectably. Otherwise, he would not, he felt bound to admit, think twice about disgracing her, and upsetting the summer visitors. Affairs continued on this basis for four years, neither better nor worse except when Tom interfered with the maid, and there were means of stopping that.

Tom was like a dog in more ways than one. He was faithful—to the Labour in Vain; he had his regular run; and he never knew when he had had enough. If he had the money, he would spend it without pause and without haste, till the last penny. What was money for? Agnes, of course, knew all this. She knew exactly how much she could afford to give him, and so did he. He knew, further, that if he spent more, no threat he could make would prevent Agnes from declaring that "Elgin" could no longer support the two of them, and simply selling up. He was lazy, stupid and worthless, but not quite such a fool as to chase away the goose which laid his golden eggs.

Things were balanced well enough always provided there were no windfalls. With a windfall, his more dog-like qualities would have a chance to assert themselves, and he would take too much. That meant, quite simply, that he would be turned out of the inn drunk at ten o'clock, stagger across the green, and be sick either in the hall or on his bedroom floor. The rest Agnes could tolerate, but these occasions, with his singing—for he sometimes sang till over-

taken—were insufferable. More often than not he would have forgotten his key, and have to be let in. If she kept him waiting, he would, when let in, fall straight on to the mat. If there were people in the house, she and the maid would lift him downstairs. If not, he stayed where he had fallen until he recovered himself, and then he would swear at her for an undutiful and cruel sister.

One October Tom had some luck. It came in the form of a ten-pound win in a shilling sweepstake. Agnes was among the first to hear of it and asked Tom for something towards a wireless which would brighten up the winter. "Wireless be damned," said Tom, and the subject dropped.

The same night, he had one of his sick drunks, forgot his key, and crashed on to the mat when she opened the door. As there was a visitor, the last remaining, the maid had to be summoned. In the morning, Agnes made an ultimatum. The next time it happened, she would refuse to let him in. For two nights he remembered his key. On the third, the first process was repeated and, incidentally, he wrenched the bell-pull out of its socket and sang until twelve. After he had gone to sleep, she abstracted all the money she could find from his pockets. The next morning the visitor gave notice.

When Tom discovered the loss of his money the row was an unparalleled one. He laid hands on her, and only the maid, giving him a slash with a poker, prevented serious damage. The poker hit him hard on the back of the head, and he retired to bed for a week or two as an assertion of authority. The maid left.

When he resumed his normal habits, the weather had settled into hard winter. On most nights, it froze, the wind blustered in the daytime; South Bay

seemed more devastated than usual. On Tom's reappearance at the Labour in Vain, the landlord and one or two cronies were so pleased to see him again that they contrived to send him home very drunk indeed. Of course he had forgotten his key, and as the bell had not been mended, it took a good deal of thumping and bawling before Agnes let him in. By that time it was so cold that he felt a trifle sobered up; sober enough to inform his sister that if ever she kept him waiting in the cold again he couldn't answer for what he'd do to her.

It was about four weeks later, about Christmas, before it did happen again. This time it was a birthday celebration. There was a layer of snow on the ground, and a little extra drop was very warming. But ten o'clock found Tom Lowther pretty far gone. He staggered across the green to "Elgin" more slowly than usual. His feet seemed worse after this bout somehow; there was a bit of a pounding in his chest; and God, it was cold.

Bang went his clumsy hands on the door. It was habit. No answer. He fumbled in his pocket. "Ah . . . all right then, damn and blast the woman," he mumbled. "I'll . . ."

Suddenly, his knees gave, and he sank heavily and peacefully into the snow.

Agnes, in her bedroom, was not sure about the bang. Anyhow, she had warned him. She turned out the gas and went to sleep.

In the morning, when the milkman came in from Maypole, Tom Lowther was still on the step, where he had fallen. His nose was in the snow, and his key in his hand. But he would never drink another drop, for he was stiff.

Next year, "Elgin" prospered. Agnes was very glad about the key.

S. R. FAIRBAIRNE-MCPHEE

THE MOTH

*A small moth, silver-winged, has come to rest
its blue being in the coolness of a rose.*

*Silken hands cling to the soft crimson snows
of leaf-down, too wearied to climb the crest;
the flower stem sways, the small velvet breast
heaves and falls as a globuled sea; like rows
of titillating jewels each hair glows
with a sizeless sun, stolen from the West.*

*Its life breathes more gently now; like lute-strings,
fingers trembling feel the petals one by one,
shaking dust of gold on the dewy core;
a black tongue drinks, till it can drink no more :
it lolls in the horned womb, to stillness won.
On red petals of rose shine silver wings.*

THE FLYING COLUMN

THE LINDBERGH BABY So talented is Mr. Aldous Huxley that he has made of his recent novel,

Brave New World, an absorbing

book. Yet that must have been a difficult thing to do. For the subject—the imaginary horrors of a “scientific” Utopia such as one may picture the world becoming many years hence—is not of exciting interest at the present time, we consider. At the worst the prospect of such horrors is very remote, and it is as likely as not that they will never come to be. But there are other, more immediate and more probable horrors, horrors of which the menace is already visible, and it is with speculations concerning these that, in our opinion, one should now more easily obtain attention. As the *New Masses* puts it, though in another sense, “Mr. Huxley should have begun nearer home.” Take, for instance, artificial emotion. In the Huxleyan Utopia, people obtain their emotions from drugs or from the surgical treatment of their glands. Notwithstanding what we have been told of the effects of opium, of hashish, or of that drug which gives one “a feeling of belief in nothing in particular,” this fails to terrify us. But we do see cause for anxiety in the way men and women will soon acquire emotions if what is already in being to-day develops unchecked. In this respect the affair of the Lindbergh baby is surely significant. With the affair itself and its many puzzling features—the sending of the flannel nightshirt, the appointment of “underworld” intermediaries, the payment of \$50,000, the mysterious journeys in aeroplanes, in cars, or in motor boats, by Colonel Lindbergh himself or by others, the story of the yacht off the coast and her captain whose hair “has been turned white,” the sudden finding of an infant’s skeleton and its prompt identification—with all that we have no present business. We merely remark, in passing, that in order to piece together all these strange data

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Edgar Allan Poe should come to life again, and that in any case *The Mystery of Marie Roget* is put quite in the shade. Our present business, however, is solely with the popular emotion which the affair has aroused. The report of the kidnapping had an astounding effect in America. According to one New York correspondent, "soldiers in their uniform, priests in their robes, flyers in their helmets, shopgirls at the counters, business men and workmen at their tasks—above all, mothers who have been bereaved and know the awful pain of it," were all stricken with grief. Special prayer meetings were held in numerous Protestant churches. Cardinal Hayes, the Roman Catholic archbishop of New York, ordered prayers in all the churches of his archdiocese. On one day the heads of a great manufacturing plant stopped all work for a moment's silent prayer, the president giving the example by dropping on his knees. There was a special meeting of the American Cabinet. Henry Johnson, a chauffeur formerly in Colonel Lindbergh's employ, was nearly lynched at Hartford, Connecticut, and had to be rescued from an angry crowd by the police. Two months later, the popular excitement, as depicted in the newspapers, had almost subsided, but it at once sprang up again with the report of the finding of the infant skeleton. Thereupon, according to the press, "the whole nation" demanded the punishment of the murderers and 28,000 persons were joining in the hunt for them. How much of the mass-emotion so feverishly described has been actually felt by actual men and women, and how much of it has been only imagined by the American pressmen, we of course cannot tell. Colonel Lindbergh himself is "news," and that must account for a lot. But if a mass-emotion of this kind can be fed and magnified by the press, there is no evidence that the press can produce it. The press is not quite in the position of one of Mr. Huxley's drugs. We notice that Mr. De Valera's threat to abolish the oath of allegiance in Ireland has left the English unmoved. At the same time we are told of a man who on the afternoon of May 6 outside the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris failed to be shocked at the news of the shooting of M. Doumer: he was attacked with sticks and umbrellas and had to escape from the mob through a café with a double exit. However, let what has caused the mass-emotion over the affair of the Lindbergh baby be what it may, we for our part do not hesitate to regard the mass-emotion

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itself as artificial. And by "artificial" we mean: not "the spontaneous overflow" of natural feeling. In this sense, an actor who so enters into his part that he deceives himself into having the feelings of the character he is impersonating is having "artificial" feelings. The emotion excited has not been confined to America. In the *Petit Parisien* of March 4, for example, M. Maurice Prax wrote of the affair as "an especially cruel and revolting episode." Yet all that has made the kidnapping of this particular baby more "cruel and revolting" than the kidnapping of the baby of some crossing-sweeper lies in two things, (a) that Colonel Lindbergh can afford to pay a bigger ransom than a crossing-sweeper could, and (b) that whereas the kidnapping of a crossing-sweeper's baby would arouse little interest, the kidnapping of Colonel Lindbergh's baby has been a great boon to the newspapers. And because the mass-emotion excited by the affair is thus artificial, we see in it a visible menace for the future.

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**AUSTRALIA'S
PROHIBITED
IMPORT** The Australian Customs, we learn, decided not to allow a recent issue of

THIS QUARTER to enter Australia. THIS QUARTER is now among Australia.

lia's prohibited imports. We are without information regarding the particular item of the issue's contents to which exception was taken. We suspect, however, that it was a reproduction of a drawing of a nude figure, such as from time to time we have published. Our suspicion is not due to the belief that Australian Customs officers cannot read, and although our conscience is free of having published in a recent issue any written matter that we ourselves should term indecent, our suspicion is also not due to the belief that Australian Customs officers are incapable of having found any of our reading-matter indecent. If to the pure all things are pure, we do not doubt that likewise to the impure

— Thus, no—why we suspect the source of the Australian Customs' objection to have been the reproduction of a nude figure is that censorship by *douaniers* is so old-fashioned, and that it is traditional in being old-fashioned to lift eyes of horror at sight of the nude. How out of fashion the Australian ban is in fact may be seen elsewhere in this present number, in an essay we print by Mr. Humbert Wolfe entitled *The Limits of Obscenity*. An acute observer of "the Old

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Country," Mr. Wolfe comes to the conclusion that obscenity in English fiction has reached its limit and that a reaction is due. Yet at the same time as, according to Mr. Wolfe, the pendulum has already swung to the extreme of licence in England, in the British dependencies it is still at the far other end of its swing. For it is in more than one dependency—not only in Australia, but also in Ireland, for instance—that certain books, containing or not containing drawings, are given an adventitious value by being made forbidden things. And in England itself these very books are now looked upon, says Mr. Wolfe, as *vieux jeu*. It is the dependencies which pride themselves on their progressiveness; it is "the Old Country" which is really in the van of change.

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Note on the Evolution of English: "If the stomach is wrong, nothing else is right."—Advertisement in London *Evening Standard*, April 5, 1932. "The rebellions of the belly are the worst."—Francis Bacon.

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*SUBLIMINAL, MEDIUMISTIC,
ORPHIC, HALLUCINATIVE
OR PSEUDO-MANTIC*

When a year or
two ago our Paris-
American contem-
porary *transition*

suspended issue, we expressed in these pages the hope that it would be resurrected. Now, not like a phoenix, but rather like an obese pythoness, *transition* has come to life again. We have to admit that this resurrection is not exactly what we looked for. Here before us—it is April as we write—is the March, 1932, number—numbered 21. It contains 325 pages apart from advertisements and is priced at \$1.50, 35 French francs, or three and a half Dutch florins. The printing is a big improvement on that of the old and more slender *transition*. It has been done by the Service Press, Rietzangerlaan 15, The Hague. The contents—well, the editor is Mr. Eugene Jolas *solus*. Two—no, three—items have attracted our attention as we turned the pages. One is a translation of some pages of Mr. Joyce's *Anna Livia Plurabelle* into Basic English. What is Basic English? It is an English language of only 850

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words devised by Mr. C. K. Ogden, *alias* the Orthological Institute of Cambridge and London. We ventured to refer to him or it in the last FLYING COLUMN. Mr. Ogden has devised Basic English as a "simple international language." It is he himself who has translated the last four pages of *Anna Livia Plurabelle*. His purpose has been "to give the simple sense" of the original Joyce; in other words, to take the Joyce out of Joyce and thereby at the same time the Aix-les-Pains, leaving the reader, paradoxically enough, with nothing but joys. The result, we find (and that is why we mention the item), is to show what very weak poteen de-alcoholized Plurabelle actually is; how insubstantial is Joyce basically, i.e. the Basic Joyce. We mean: how many words, words, words, and how little said with them! Really, the translation is a scurvy trick to have played on a writer so dependent on his mystery! We do not mean that Mr. Ogden has not done his translating admirably. Quite the contrary. The nude *Anna Livia*, Anna Livia undressed and shown naked, sounds quite jolly. Clearly, however, she is only sound. The translation demonstrates that the glamour of Original Joyce—Joyce with all the strange words on, wrapping him up—is the glamour of the lady of fashion dressed up for the ball. The second item we have noticed in *transition* is a contribution from Mr. H. L. Mencken. It says nothing Mr. Mencken has not said before, but with what it says we are not concerned. We call attention to the way that what is said. Mr. Mencken expresses himself so clearly and so neatly that his two little paragraphs contrast most instructively with the protracted flatulence of the other writings swelling and rumbling over page after page. And that brings us to the third item, if item it can be called—the editor's "Preface" to the new number. Mr. Jolas says he intends *transition* shall lead to a subliminal ethos; it will encourage mediumistic experiments and so defend the hallucinative forces; it is to be a mantic laboratory of orphic creation. That is why, in view of its size, we began by comparing the new *transition* to an obese pythoness. With regard to these aims which Mr. Jolas avows, we have no doubt that when he himself takes up a pen he is hallucinative. We suggest, however, that the result is pseudo-mantic. We suggest Mr. Jolas would be of more interest if he could write as well as Mr. Mencken than he will ever be by either attempting or sponsoring "orphic creation."

THE FLYING COLUMN

THE WRITING OF POETRY In a London Sunday newspaper's selection of "Sayings of the Week" — that unintentional exposure of public men's fatuity — Mr. T. S. Eliot was credited the other day with declaring that the writing of poetry is very difficult, almost impossible, because often the poet is unable to distinguish between his actual feelings and what he thinks he is feeling. We have mentioned Mr. Eliot frequently in these pages, and it may be risking monotony both for him and our readers to refer to him once again. But, as he himself has remarked, so few people say anything about which one can either agree or disagree. Not only do we with the above statement emphatically disagree, but we are also convinced that nowadays there is in general far too much chatter about the writing of poetry. Let us deal with the general point first.

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WHAT SOCRATES SAID It is a far cry from Mr. Eliot's utterance to M. André Maurois' new novel, *Le Cercle de Famille*. We find, however, that between that novel and the utterance a link is provided in Plato's *Protagoras*. If M. Maurois has made his heroine charming, he has at the same time made her apt to be absurd. We do not say this reproachfully. On the contrary, he is no doubt all the more to be congratulated since thereby she gains in verisimilitude. One absurdity of hers is the self-satisfaction with which she dispenses hospitality by having people to her house to hear expensive vocalists. At one such recital she has arranged, a woman of the audience protests, "*Six mille francs de cachet la veille d'une faillite, c'est indécent !*" It is the scene in the novel where this protest occurs that reminds us of the *Protagoras*, and of where Socrates says: "The vulgar and uneducated, being too ignorant to converse together over their cups, through the medium of their own voices and words, keep up the prices of flute-players, by hiring, for large sums, the foreign aid of their flutes, and entertaining each other through their voices. But in the banquets of gentlemen and scholars, you will see neither dancing-girls nor women that play on the flute or the lyre; but you will find the guests themselves

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equal to the task of conversing, without these puerile toys, by their own voices; both speaking and listening in turn, with decency and order, even though they have drunk a great quantity of wine." Now the relevance which this passage from the *Protagoras*, called to mind by the notion of a jolly evening held by M. Maurois' heroine, has to the contemporary chatter about the writing of poetry — of which Mr. Eliot's assertion is an example — is this, that it is "talking about poetry" which Socrates says resembles closely the "festive amusements of the vulgar and uneducated"! A common lament to-day is that we no longer care about poetry. If the lament has justice, is the abundance of the talk we are given about the *writing* of poetry not partly to blame? Here, for instance, is Mr. Eliot confiding to the world that poetry is very difficult, almost impossible, to write. Of what interest is that to any but poets? Certainly it is of no interest to readers and would-be readers of poetry. The concern of these can be only with poems and the quality of poems—not with poets and their real or supposed difficulties. So long as they are comfortable and lasting in wear, we do not care that a pair of shoes have been very difficult, almost impossible, to make. It must be likewise with poems: what matters is that a poem should stir us and stir us the more the oftener we return to it. If a poem succeeds in that, we cannot care what difficulties were overcome in its making.

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POETRY Now we may turn to our particular point.
REDEFINED Mr. Eliot's talent as a poet is not open to discussion. That a man is a real poet, however, does not necessarily guarantee the soundness of every utterance he makes concerning the nature of poetry. And we suspect, indeed, that Mr. Eliot misapprehends that nature. We suspect he is under the old Romantic delusion of supposing a poem is something a poet does with his feelings. If so, we are sure he is wrong. A poem is not something a poet does with his feelings; it is an instrument whereby a poet excites feelings in other people. It may be Mr. Eliot would grant this. It may be he would grant it and then go on to insist that only the poem produced by real feelings in the poet will excite, and excite again, the feelings of its reader. But if he did, we should retort that

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this was worse blether than ever ! A poem's power to excite, and excite again, the feelings of its reader cannot depend on the poem's being the product of the poet's real feelings. What tickles our funny-bone does not have to be itself a funny-bone !

It is not even the fact that the poet has to acquire experience of the power of words over people before he can exercise that power. No amount of experience will confer upon a man the ability to think of words and arrangements of words which will move the readers of them. That ability is a gift or talent. Like any other gift or talent, it will develop under cultivation, that is to say, through experience. In particular, the poetic gift or talent develops thanks to two distinct sets of experience which commonly accumulate *pari passu*—the experience of how other poets have employed words and the experience of how the experiencing poet himself succeeds in employing them. Yet all experience, like all effort, must be futile unless the gift or talent is itself already there. Few hackneyed sayings are truer than *Poeta nascitur non fit*. However, that is not the whole matter. It remains that the poet employs words effectively, i.e. produces poetry, only if he composes as the result of a stimulus, and it may be Mr. Eliot's meaning that the stimulus of a real feeling is better than the stimulus of an imaginary one—that real feeling stimulates the poet to compose real poetry, what the poet thinks he feels stimulates him only to compose *ersatz* poetry. If such is Mr. Eliot's meaning, then for his contention to be valid it must be that the more real the feeling which stimulates, the more real the poetry stimulated. Is this invariably the case ? A single example to the contrary is enough to establish Mr. Eliot in error. The first real poem the genesis of which the poet has described that now occurs to us as we write is *The Wreck of the Deutschland*. This, the poet himself has said, came to be written because a ship had foundered with a company of nuns on board, and the poet, who was a priest, was asked to write a poem about the happening by his superior. Thus the poem was written to order. Nevertheless, the poet subsequently declared that the incident had at the time moved him greatly. Let us then grant for the moment that the stimulus to the composition of the poem was a real emotion. Yet obviously it cannot have been so thoroughly real as other emotions one can think of. For instance, if the poet, instead of having

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been a priest, had been married, and it was his wife who had gone down with the ship, his emotion might have been more real than the emotion he actually had. How "more real"? it may be asked. If the poet felt anything, what he felt must have been real. We mean, that since he was unacquainted with any of the nuns, we do not believe that he would have been affected by their cruel end if he had not held a number of conventional notions about death and nuns, and that to this extent his emotion was artificial. However, in any case we do not see why we should grant that the stimulus to the composition of the poem was a real feeling in the sense of a feeling experienced in ordinary life. When the poet declared that the news of the drowning of the nuns had moved him greatly, his words were ambiguous. He may have meant that he was greatly upset or he may have meant that he felt in the incident remarkable poetic possibilities. We incline to think he really meant the latter. This latter, we believe, was alone the stimulus for the poem. It is, we consider, always so, and we are confident a poet can see as excellent poetic possibilities in imaginary feelings as in real.

* *

The next (September) number of **THIS QUARTER** (Vol. V, No. 1) will have as "Guest Editor" M. André Breton, the Surrealiste leader, and the contributors, selected by him, will all be Surrealistes. The contents of the number, having been written in French, will be translated into English under our own editorial care. It will be the first time that the Surrealistes expound their point of view and publish specimens of their poems, &c., in a review circulating in England and America.

* *

There will be published in later issues of **THIS QUARTER** :

A Poem by *A. L. Rowse*;
Stories, by *Neville Brand, Alfred H. Mendes, Ira V. Morris, and Marion Ward*.

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